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Jenrick attacks court for ordering UK to justify removing jihadi bride's citizenship

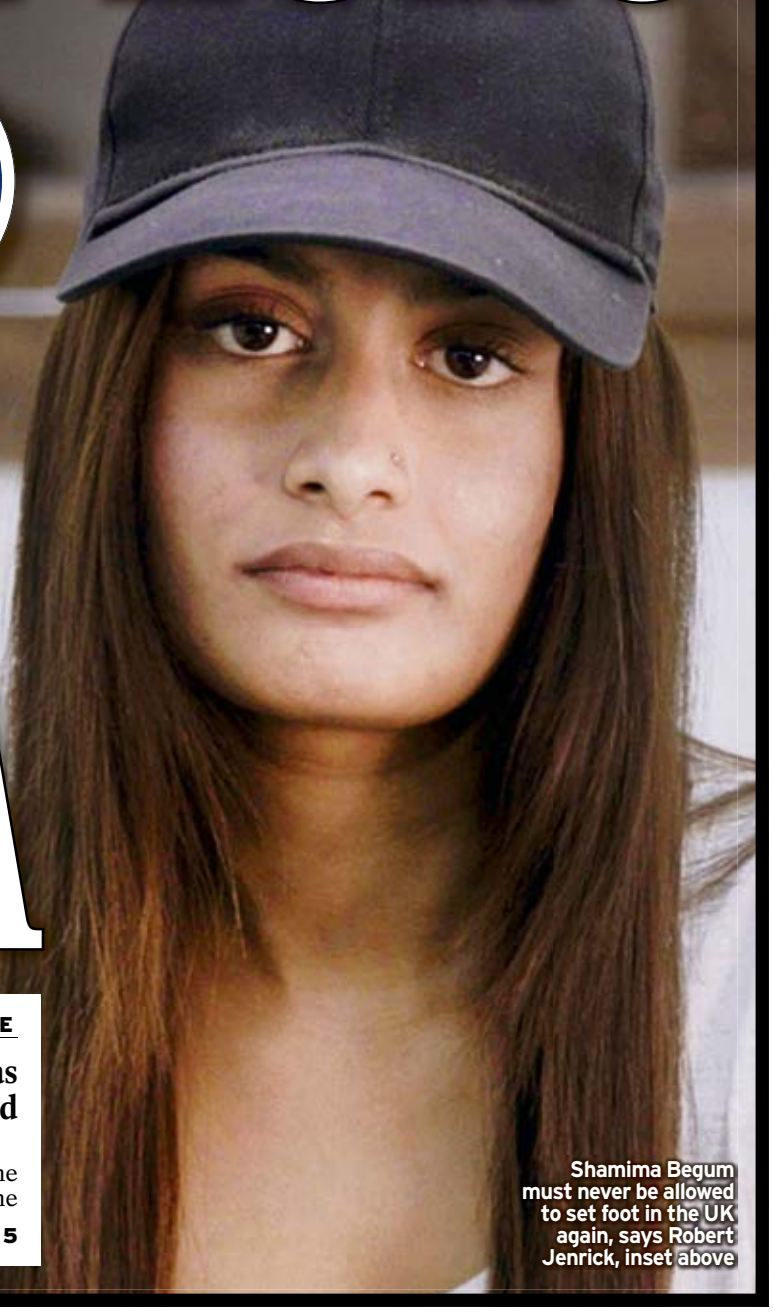
MEDDLING EURO JUDGES TAKE ON SHAMIMA CASE

EXCLUSIVE BY **MICHAEL KNOWLES** and **CHRISTIAN CALGIE**

SHAMIMA Begum's UK return bid was revived as Strasbourg judges challenged Britain's stance on the jihadi bride.

Her lawyers welcomed the "opportunity" as the European Court of Human Rights demanded the

TURN TO PAGE 5



Shamima Begum must never be allowed to set foot in the UK again, says Robert Jenrick, inset above

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TESCO

Every little helps

Here's looking at zoo

BY **ELIZABETH HUNTER**

A GIBBON flashes a cheeky grin in a collection of zookeepers' best photos.

The snap of a lar gibbon taken by Esme Murphy at Dudley Zoo, West Midlands, is among photos shared by zookeepers across Europe of their animals' cutest, funniest poses.

A lion cub photographed by Chloe Stamper, yawning alongside its dad at Yorkshire Wildlife Park, also made it into the collection, as did a baby parma wallaby, also at Dudley, snapped as it basked in the sun by keeper Jessica Emery.

Jenn Rawson at the New Forest Wildlife Park contributed a cluster of cute harvest mice cuddling, while Miriam Hass of Paignton Zoo in Devon managed to get a shot of a Western lowland gorilla sheltering from the sun under a cloak.

But the photo judged the best this year was taken by Terri Cook at the Wildheart Sanctuary on the Isle of Wight. It features a brown bear in a pool, munching on a stick of bamboo.

Craig Holmes, who has been a zookeeper for more than a decade, selects the winners.

He said: "A lot of zookeepers are into photography, and can often get good shots.

"There are always a lot of funny photos and keepers enjoy the opportunity to share their best moments."

Yawning lion cub at Yorkshire Wildlife Park, leaning joey at Dudley and cuddling harvest mice in New Forest

Grinning ways from a lar gibbon in Dudley, main; winning bear with bamboo, above; and gorilla appwears to be acting out its love for TV's The Traitors, right

Hard day's night for boss baboons

HEAVY is the head that wears the crown... even for baboons.

Dominant members of primate troops miss out on restful nights say researchers who found that higher-ranking baboons suffer from fragmented rest, not helped by wakeful bedfellows.

The Swansea University team explained that communal sleeping for animals can offer protection. But, much like in humans, close neighbours can disturb each another, affecting the quality of sleep.

Study lead Marco Fele, a PhD student at Swansea, said: "We expected dominant baboons to get better rest, perhaps because they could choose the most comfortable or sheltered spots. But we found the opposite. Dominant baboons had

BY **STEPHEN BEECH**

less and more interrupted rest." Using GPS and accelerometer collars, the research team tracked the daytime and night-time activity of a troop of chacma baboons, a species with a strong hierarchical social structure, in South Africa.

Disruptions

They discovered that baboons are in sync at night, with individuals resting and waking together.

However, because higher-ranked baboons have more nearby group members, that leads them to exert greater influence on each other's night-time behaviour compared with lower-ranked individuals – and so dominant baboons are more likely to wake each other up.

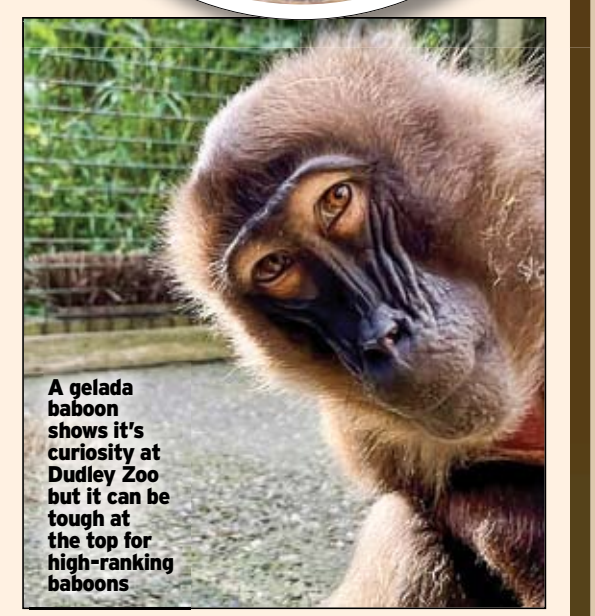
The study, published in Current Biology, is the first to find social hierarchies may impact sleep in wild primates.

It suggests that daytime leadership and influence may come with a night-time cost.

Study co-author Professor Andrew King said: "Just like in humans, sleep is essential for health and decision making.

"If dominant individuals are resting less at night, it could affect their performance and wellbeing. Equally, it may be that baboons get enough rest overall, so the costs would be minimal."

Prof King added: "Future work now needs to test the consequences of these night-time disruptions."



A gelada baboon shows it's curiosity at Dudley Zoo but it can be tough at the top for high-ranking baboons

Survey on national identity

'Born here to be British' sentiment is soaring

BY **DAVID WILLIAMSON**

THE number of people who say you must be "born British to be truly British" has nearly doubled in two years from 19% to 36%.

And seven in 10 Reform UK supporters think it is important to have British ancestry to be truly British, according to YouGov polling for the Left-leaning IPPR think tank.

This was the case for 56% of people planning to vote Tory at the next election – much higher than among supporters of the Lib Dems (37%), Labour (27%) and the Greens (19%).

However, just over half of those polled think that being British is something you can become with effort – and only 3% said a person needed to have white skin.

Proud

When Britons were asked to name five qualities that make a good British citizen, the top answers were obeying the law (64%), raising children to be kind (62%) and working hard (48%).

When asked what would make them proud of the UK in 10 years' time, the most popular choices were a well-functioning NHS (69%), life becoming more affordable (53%) and more affordable housing (36%).

Fewer than three in 10 wanted reductions in the immigrant population, with only 13% desiring a fall in the ethnic minority population.

The researchers found consistent falls in people proud of Britain when it came to sports, the arts or literature, its history, the way democracy works or its political influence or economy.

People are expected to take to the streets. Below, will Sir Keir Starmer and Kemi Badenoch be replaced?

Riots and recession the top predictions for 2026

PUBLIC unrest and an economic spiral are expected by a majority of Britons in 2026.

Polling lays bare the pessimism across the UK as the nation looks ahead to the next 12 months.

More than six out of 10 people quizzed (61%) fear there will be violent riots and protests in Keir Starmer's Britain.

And almost as many (60%) expect the UK to enter a recession.

A majority (54%) also worry that a major cyber attack will disrupt critical infrastructure.

In international politics – and despite the current high-profile talks – just 22% say it is likely the war in Ukraine will end.

And, in the sporting world, there is little optimism England and captain Harry Kane will reach the World Cup final, with only 34% expecting such a scenario in the US.

BY **DAVID WILLIAMSON**
Chief Political Commentator

The More in Common polling also shows many Britons expect Labour to suffer further setbacks.

Nearly half (48%) think it will no longer be the biggest party in Wales after the May elections. Labour has led the devolved government since devolution began in 1999.

And there is deep pessimism about Labour improving the NHS, with 72% saying it is unlikely the number of people on waiting lists will fall further. Only 21% say this is likely.

Downer for Harry Kane and England

The UK is split on Sir Keir staying on as PM, with 44% saying it is likely he will resign or be removed and 43% saying it is unlikely.

Just 27% believe it is likely Kemi Badenoch will quit or be ousted as Conservative leader. This contrasts with polling from Ladbrokes putting Sir Keir and Mrs Badenoch both on 7/4 to be replaced in 2026.

Sir Keir can take some comfort that 55% of those polled say it is unlikely the Greens will overtake Labour in the polls.

Meanwhile, there is much more confidence the Trump era will continue. Only 15% think the US president will resign or be removed, with more than three-quarters (76%) considering this unlikely. But there is concern about a global economic shock, with 32% fearing the artificial intelligence industry is a bubble that will cause a financial crash.

Reform's deputy leader Richard Tice said: "It's no wonder the public are filled with despair. Decades of Conservative and Labour rule have not only broken Britain but crushed the hopes of millions."

Tory party chairman Kevin Hollinrake said: "It is hardly a surprise the public are bracing themselves for a recession when Labour's economic mismanagement and Budget are pushing Britain in the wrong direction. This polling paints a bleak picture."

A Labour source said: "We're determined to continue the hard work of renewing Britain – just as we promised."

LABOUR MUST CHANGE: PAGE 10

Chancellor Rachel Reeves

Signs of hope amid the economic pessimism

BY **HOLLY WILLIAMS**

HOUSEHOLDS and businesses have had a bumpy ride over 2025 as tax hikes and US president Donald Trump's trade war weighed on the economy – but interest rate cuts helped cushion the blow.

Reviewing the year, many economists said Rachel Reeves had dealt a blow to businesses in April, with the increase in employers' national insurance contributions coinciding with a rise in the minimum wage.

Warnings that the tax hike would lead to price rises in shops and job cuts appeared to be borne out, as the increasing cost of food saw inflation hit an annual peak of 3.8% in the summer. As retailers grappled with the hit to their wage bills, many responded with price rises.

For food retailers, this also coincided with soaring costs for a range of staples, such as meat – particularly beef – coffee and chocolate, as well as a new packaging tax.

Impact

This sent food and drink inflation back up to 4.9% by October.

Unemployment rose to 5.1% in the three months to October as fears on the impact of rising labour costs came to pass.

The rate was the highest for more than four and a half years, but outside the Covid era it was the highest for nearly a decade.

But easing wage growth helped the Bank of England deliver four rate cuts since the start of the year. A final pre-Christmas reduction in December saw the base rate come down from 4.75% at the start of 2025 to 3.75% by the year's end.

In November, the Office for Budget Responsibility upgraded its growth outlook to 1.5% from its previous prediction of 1%.

Elliott Jordan-Doak at Pantheon Macroeconomics believes the gloom will lift in 2026. He said: "The improvement in consumers' confidence bodes well for consumer spending. GDP growth should accelerate in the first quarter."

CITY: PAGE 47

‘Begum chose to get into bed with Isis terrorists and she must now live with the consequences’

Alaa Abd el-Fattah back in the UK

‘Extremist’ backs claim he is victim of Zionist plot

BY **MICHAEL KNOWLES**

FRESH fury erupted over the bungled handling of an Egyptian “extremist” after his Facebook account liked a post claiming that he is the victim of a smear campaign.

Alaa Abd el-Fattah’s account liked a claim that “Zionists” were “behind a campaign” against him.

It also emerged that el-Fattah’s sister Mona Seif once suggested that violence by Hamas could be justified.

El-Fattah apologised for his hateful tweets, but claimed some had been twisted.

Sir Keir Starmer’s spokesman described the statement as a “fulsome apology”.

But Shadow Justice Secretary Robert Jenrick said: “Starmer claims he can’t revoke el-Fattah’s citizenship because he isn’t a threat to national security. Really?”

Just a day after Hamas terrorists killed over 1,200 Israelis in 2023’s October 7 attacks, El-Fattah’s sister, Mona Seif, thought to live in London, claimed armed resistance in “occupied” land was “understandable”.

Failures

Mr Jenrick added: “Far from thanking Starmer for securing her brother’s release, she urged him to release those awaiting trial for offences connected with the proscribed terrorist organisation, Palestine Action.

“It only took a few minutes to find these extreme views on her social media.

“You’d have thought civil servants in the FCDO or the politicians who praised her would have done so.”

Yvette Cooper said she had ordered a Foreign Office review of “serious information failures” in the consular case of Alaa Abd el-Fattah after the emergence of his social media posts in 2010 calling for Zionists to be killed.

Ms Cooper said procedures and due diligence had been “completely inadequate” in the case and that the Government viewed the tweets as “abhorrent”.

El-Fattah flew back to the UK on Boxing Day after the government secured his release from prison in Egypt.

COMMENT: PAGE 12

FROM PAGE ONE

Home Office justify its decision to strip the Islamic State fanatic of her British citizenship.

The court asked the government whether it broke human rights and anti-trafficking laws – which is Begum’s key legal argument.

This will reignite fears that UK court rulings upholding Begum’s exclusion could be overruled and she could eventually be allowed to return to the UK.

Shadow Justice Secretary Robert Jenrick told the Daily Express the Strasbourg intervention underlined why Britain must leave the European Convention on Human Rights, which is upheld in member states by the ECtHR.

He said: “Under no circumstances should Shamima Begum ever step foot in the UK again. She chose to get into bed with Isis terrorists and must now live with the consequences. We don’t need a foreign court in Strasbourg meddling in who can or can’t come into this country.

“This is another example of why we must leave the ECHR and take back control of our borders.”

Begum was born and raised in Bethnal Green, east London. She travelled to Syria aged 15 with two school friends to join Isis in 2015.

She wed Dutch Islamic convert Yago Riedijk and they had three children, who all died as infants.

In 2019, the then home secretary Sajid Javid stripped her of British citizenship on the basis she could also claim citizenship in Bangladesh so would not be stateless – a decision upheld by the Supreme Court.

Having lost all her appeals in the UK, Begum, now 26, is still in Syria’s al-Roj detention camp, home to thousands of former jihadis.

But now the ECtHR has asked the Home Office to answer four questions about its handling of her case.

Many cases submitted to the court are thrown out before they reach this stage, so its challenge suggests that Strasbourg believes Begum’s human rights may have been breached.

Former security minister Sir Ben Wallace, who was part of the citizenship deprivation case for the Home Office, told the Daily Express: “She went of her own free will to support a cause that doesn’t believe in any Western court.

“She wasn’t a victim. She knowingly and freely joined Isis and assisted them in the prosecution of their murderous campaign. She deserved to lose her citizenship.

“The cheek of her going through a court system that she and the other terrorists would fundamentally want to destroy isn’t lost on anybody. She wanted to go there. She can stay there.”

Former immigration minister Kevin Foster, who was at the Home Office during the legal battles, told the Express: “Yet again, the ECtHR is meddling in UK affairs to defend those who had no interest in the rights of others when they backed extremists.

Rights

“Shamima Begum’s case has been considered extensively by the UK courts and the decision upheld.

“Perhaps if the ECtHR was as interested in the rights of those girls affected by the grooming gangs scandal, as they are in the supporters of terrorists, they might regain some of the respect they have lost.”

The ECtHR hinted at concerns as to whether the Home Office has used deprivation of citizenship as a “punishment” in some cases. It asked whether the government had “duties or obligations” to Begum as a potential “victim of trafficking”.

Gareth Peirce of Birnberg Peirce Solicitors, representing Begum, said the intervention “presents an unprecedented opportunity for the UK, as well as for Ms Begum, to grapple with the significant considerations raised in her case and ignored, sidestepped or violated by previous UK administrations.”

The Home Office said: “Shamima Begum – who posed a national security threat – had her British citizenship revoked. We will robustly defend any decision made to protect our national security.”

OPINION: PAGE 12

EXPRESS VOTE

Should the UK reject the European court’s request over Shamima Begum?

YES: 0901 133 4440
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Yes text DXYES to 63333
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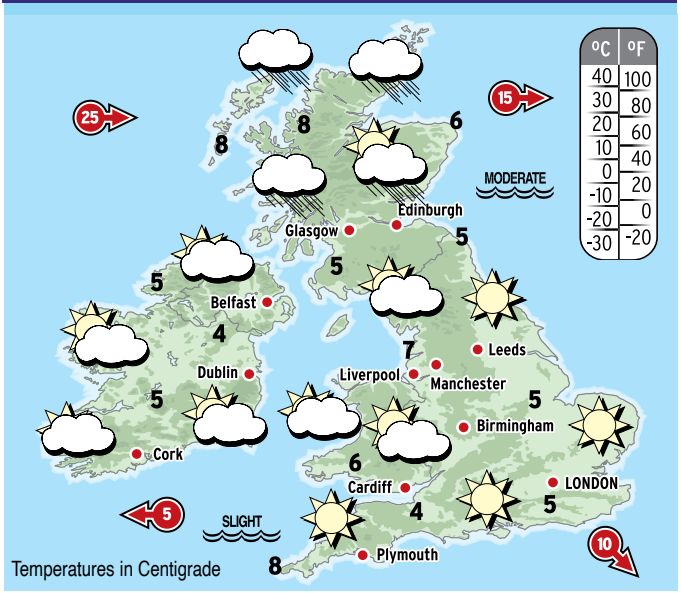
Shamima Begum fled the UK aged 15 to become an Isis bride; below, in Syrian detention camp

Jenrick, left, said the case is another reason to quit the ECHR

DX1ST

WEATHER FORECAST



Today's summary: Chilly start, clear cool night

North West: Cloudy with bright spells. Mostly overcast later. Breezy with brisk winds. Chilly. High 6C (43F).

Northern Ireland: Cloudy with sunny spells later. Moderate winds increase, feeling crisp and cool. High 4C (39F).

Wales: Sunny spells, then clouds later. Light winds. Crisp early, cool by afternoon. High 5C (41F).

Midlands: Sunny, later becoming cloudy. Gentle winds, feeling cold throughout the day. High 4C (39F).

North East/Yorks: Sunny spells early, clouds increase later. Breezy with a cool feel. High 5C (41F).

Scotland: Cloudy start, clearing to sunshine. Breezy with strong winds later. Chilly becoming milder. High 6C (43F).

East Anglia: Mostly cloudy start. Sunshine dominates later. Breezy, turning chilly in the evening. High 5C (41F).

London/South East: Cold start with sunny intervals, clear later. Light to moderate winds, remaining chilly. High 5C (41F).

South: Bright and sunny, clear skies later. Light winds throughout, chilly temperatures prevail. High 5C (41F).

South West: Sunny spells dominate. Clouds increase by evening. Gentle breezes, feeling chilly. High 4C (39F).

Channel Isles: Cloudy with sunny intervals later. Light winds, becoming calm. Chilly throughout the day. High 6C (43F).

Sea: North Sea: Tyne. Irish Sea: Smooth or slight. Channel: Wight.

UK OUTLOOK TOMORROW: Expect cool conditions with sunny spells and light winds. Cloud increases later, bringing a chance of drizzle in some areas by evening.

SIX-DAY FORECAST Temperatures in Centigrade

	THU min max	FRI min max	SAT min max	SUN min max	MON min max	TUE min max
London	1 7	-2 5	-3 3	-3 3	-2 3	1 4
Belfast	2 6	0 4	-1 3	-1 3	0 3	2 4
Birmingham	1 7	-2 4	-3 3	-3 2	-1 3	1 3
Cardiff	2 8	-2 6	-2 4	-1 4	0 5	3 5
Glasgow	1 6	-1 4	-2 3	-2 3	0 4	2 4
Manchester	2 7	-3 4	-2 3	-4 2	-1 2	1 3
Newcastle	0 6	-2 3	-3 2	-3 1	-2 2	1 2
Norwich	0 7	-1 4	-2 3	-2 2	-2 3	1 3
Plymouth	4 8	1 7	1 5	2 5	2 6	6 7

Britain yesterday

24 hours to 5pm	SUN (hrs)	RAIN (ins)	TEMP (min)	TEMP (max)
Aberdeen	0.4	0.00	2	4
Aberporth	2.3	0.00	2	5
Alnwick	0.0	0.04	5	6
Belfast	4.4	0.00	4	6
Birmingham	0.9	0.00	2	5
B'mouth	6.6	0.00	2	7
Bristol	1.6	0.00	4	6
Cardiff	1.8	0.00	4	7
Durham	0.0	0.08	2	5
Edinburgh	4.5	0.00	-2	3
Glasgow	5.6	0.01	-1	2
Hull	1.2	0.03	3	6
Ipswich	4.1	0.01	1	6
Leeds	1.0	0.00	2	5
Lincoln	0.1	0.01	3	5
London	4.7	0.00	2	7
Manchester	0.0	0.00	2	6
Oxford	0.5	0.00	3	6
S'hampton	2.8	0.00	3	7
St Andrews	5.3	0.00	-1	4

Moon, sun and tides

MOON rises: 12.43pm, sets: 4.58am
SUN rises London: 8.06am, sets: 4.01pm
Manchester rises: 8.25am, sets: 3.59pm

Full Moon 03 January

HIGH TIDE

London B'ge	(10.14am), (10.58pm)
Liverpool	(7.48am), (8.14pm)
Greenock	(8.59am), (9.38pm)
Dover	(7.40am), (8.22pm)

Britain Extremes: (24 hours to 11pm Monday)
Warmest: St. Mary's 8C (46F)
Coldest: Tyndrum -7C (19F)
Wettest: High Mowthorpe 0.72in.
Sunniest: Jersey 7.2hr.

Lighting-up times

Belfast	4.07pm-8.45am
Birmingham	4.03pm-8.18am
Bristol	4.11pm-8.15am
Glasgow	3.52pm-8.47am
London	4.01pm-8.06am
Manchester	3.59pm-8.25am
Newcastle	3.47pm-8.31am

Europe forecast

Today			Tomorrow		
Amsterdam	Cloudy	8C/46F	Amsterdam	Rain	6C/43F
Brussels	Fair	6C/43F	Brussels	Rain	5C/41F
Dublin	Fair	5C/41F	Dublin	Fair	8C/46F
Frankfurt	Cloudy	3C/37F	Frankfurt	Cloudy	4C/39F
Geneva	Sunny	1C/34F	Geneva	Sunny	3C/37F
Lisbon	Fog	13C/55F	Lisbon	Showers	14C/57F
Madrid	Sunny	10C/50F	Madrid	Fair	8C/46F
Paris	Sunny	4C/39F	Paris	Cloudy	3C/37F
Rome	Fair	11C/52F	Rome	Rain	12C/54F

Around the world yesterday

		C	F			C	F			C	F
Amsterdam	Fair	5	41	Hong Kong	Sunny	22	72	New York	Rain	7	45
Athens	Fair	14	57	Istanbul	Sunny	11	52	Nice	Sunny	11	52
Barcelona	Sunny	12	54	Jersey	Fair	7	45	Nicosia	Fair	14	57
Berlin	Sunny	1	34	Larnaca	Fair	17	63	Perth	Sunny	29	84
Budapest	Sunny	2	36	Las Palmas	Sunny	20	68	Prague	Sunny	-1	30
Cairo	Fair	19	66	Los Angeles	Sunny	22	72	Singapore	Cloudy	31	88
Cape Town	Sunny	25	77	Luxor	Sunny	21	70	Stockholm	Fair	-2	28
Casablanca	Fair	17	63	Malaga	Sunny	14	57	Sydney	Sunny	23	73
Corfu	Shwrs	12	54	Mallorca	Sunny	15	59	Tel Aviv	Shwrs	18	64
Dublin	Cloudy	7	45	Malta	Fair	16	61	Tenerife	Sunny	22	72
Dubrovnik	Cloudy	12	54	Melbourne	Fair	27	81	Toronto	Snow	-2	28
Faro	Fair	12	54	Miami	Sunny	26	79	Tunis	Fair	16	61
Florence	Fair	9	48	Moscow	Snow	-4	25	Venice	Fair	7	45
Gibraltar	Fair	13	55	Nairobi	Thndr	23	73	Vienna	Sunny	2	36
Guernsey	Cloudy	8	46	New Delhi	Sunny	15	59	Warsaw	Fair	-2	28

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Shocking crimes tally of migrants in just one month

BY **AARON NEWBURY**

AROUND a dozen migrants have been convicted of serious crimes in December, including violent sexual assaults, attempted murder and attempted kidnapping.

Asylum seeker Amer Mohammed, 24, from Eritrea, got nine years on December 18 after violently sexually assaulting a woman in Margate, Kent.

Convicted terrorist, Rebwar Hamad, 48, from Iraq, was sentenced to more than two years on December 5, after he illegally entered the country via a small boat.

He was extradited to Italy, from the UK, after being convicted of terror offences there, before trying to re-enter Britain again.

Adam Ahmed, a 30-year-old Sudanese migrant, was convicted of attempted murder this month after stabbing two of his neighbours, following a row over loud music in Sunderland.

A court heard he had not shown a "trace of emotion" when he attacked one of them by driving a knife into the side of their neck. He will be sentenced on January 30, 2026. Meanwhile, another Sudanese migrant, Abdulmawal Ibrahim Adam, 28, got four years on December 12 after attempting to kidnap a teenage girl.

Amer Mohammed and Abdulmawal Ibrahim Adam were convicted

Rape

He tried to drag his victim across the road, before he was chased off by passengers in a passing bus.

Nasratullah Wahidi, 20, from Afghanistan, who entered the country with his family legally in 2020, got three years on December 15 after he attacked a family of five and choked a pregnant woman in Weymouth, Dorset. Two Afghan asylum seekers, Jan Jahanzeb, 17, and Israr Niazal, 17, were jailed for around 10 years each, on December 8, for the rape of a 15-year-old girl in Leamington Spa, Warks.

Hawre Mohamed, 27, from Iraq, was sentenced to eight months after he sexually assaulted a woman on a train in the South East.

Chret Callender, 28, from Trinidad, a failed asylum seeker, was convicted of raping a woman in her Bournemouth home. He will be sentenced in January.

The Home Office was approached for comment.

Discount rail fares on sale next week

BY **DAVID WILLIAMSON**

MILLIONS of cheaper rail tickets will go on sale next week, with many at less than half price.

The Great British Rail Sale will run from January 6 to 12 and cut the cost of commuting as well as half-term and weekend getaways.

An Exeter to London Waterloo ticket will drop from £41.70 to £10 while Newcastle to Middlesbrough will fall from £5.20 to £2.

Portsmouth to London will be reduced from £24.60 to £10 and Nottingham to London halved to £23.

Opportunity

Commuters from Charing Cross to Tunbridge Wells will pay £4 rather than £8.10 and flyers going from Manchester Piccadilly to the city's airport will pay £1.20 instead of £2.90.

The cut-price fares can be used to travel on thousands of routes between January 13 and March 25. Last year more than one million were sold, with passengers saving £8 per journey on average.

Patricia Yates, of VisitBritain, said: "The new year provides the perfect opportunity to hop onto a train and explore Britain."

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COMMENT

SIMON FRANCIS

Co-ordinator of the End Fuel Poverty Coalition

BRITAIN'S cold homes crisis is making people ill – and it will get worse unless we act now.

For years, campaigners have warned that Britain's cold homes crisis is not just about comfort, it is about health, dignity and fairness.

Nearly one in three people cannot keep their home at a safe temperature. This is a figure that should stop us in our tracks.

Cold homes worsen lung disease, heart conditions and mobility problems, yet millions are expected to simply endure them.

Households on lower incomes, families with children and people living with long-term health conditions are far more likely to struggle. These are the very groups least able to absorb high energy costs and most likely to suffer serious consequences.

Despite repeated warnings, the proportion of over-65s living in cold, damp homes has barely shifted in years.

Excess cold and damp are closely linked to mould, respiratory illness and avoidable hospital admissions, adding pressure to the NHS.

Reliant

This crisis also exposes a deeper failure of long-term planning. If things are bad now, they will worsen as the North Sea becomes unable to meet heating needs by 2027.

This is not about politics, it's the geological reality of a declining basin. As domestically produced gas runs out, we're left reliant on expensive imports that still fail to keep homes warm.

Restoring winter fuel payments has helped reduce anxiety among pensioners, and that matters. But short-term support is no substitute for fixing homes.

Real energy security comes from warm, efficient housing that cuts demand altogether.

Until the UK treats warm, dry homes as essential infrastructure, we will keep paying the price in ill health, inequality and rising public costs.

A serious Warm Homes Plan is not optional. It is overdue and every delay leaves more people stuck in homes that make them ill.

3 million struggling to keep homes warm

EXCLUSIVE

BY **KATIE HARRIS**
Senior Political Correspondent

MORE than three million older people in Britain are struggling to keep their homes warm enough, analysis has shown.

Campaigners say this is stark evidence that the state pension triple lock must be protected to stop vulnerable pensioners being pushed deeper into fuel poverty.

Polling found 23% of over-65s said they are unable to keep their property at the recommended minimum temperature of 18C (64.4F).

The End Fuel Poverty Coalition, which commissioned the survey, estimates this equates to around 3.2 million older people. Its research also found energy bills are 69% higher than in winter 2020.

'It's shocking after years of warnings so many are at risk'

Simon Francis, co-ordinator of the campaign group, said: "It's shocking that after years of warnings, so many people are still stuck in homes that put their health at risk.

"No one should be facing winter worried about whether their home is warm enough."

Dennis Reed, director of pensioner pressure group Silver Voices, added: "It is scandalous as we move into the heart of winter at least three million senior citizens are risking their health as they cannot afford to heat homes. The large majority of these do not receive benefits and therefore do not qualify for warm homes discount or cold-weather payments. If it was not for the triple lock helping to keep the state pension in line with rising energy and food prices, millions more would be shivering."

The triple lock ensures the state pension rises in line with the highest of earnings, inflation or 2.5%.

The government has pledged the policy, which the Daily Express has a long-running crusade to defend, will remain in place until the end of the current parliament. But Labour, the Conservatives and Reform UK are yet to commit to it for the duration of the next parliament.

National Pensioners Convention general secretary Jan Shortt said: "A living state pension inflation-proofed by the triple lock is essential and something we all must fight for."

The poll of 2,000 adults by Opinium found almost one in three (29%) cannot keep homes warm. The government said: "Our commitment to the triple lock means millions are set to see their state pension rise by £2,100, with an extra 57,000 households given pension credit, worth up to £86 a week. Nine million will benefit from the winter fuel payment and the £150 warm home discount, expanded to six million [homes]."

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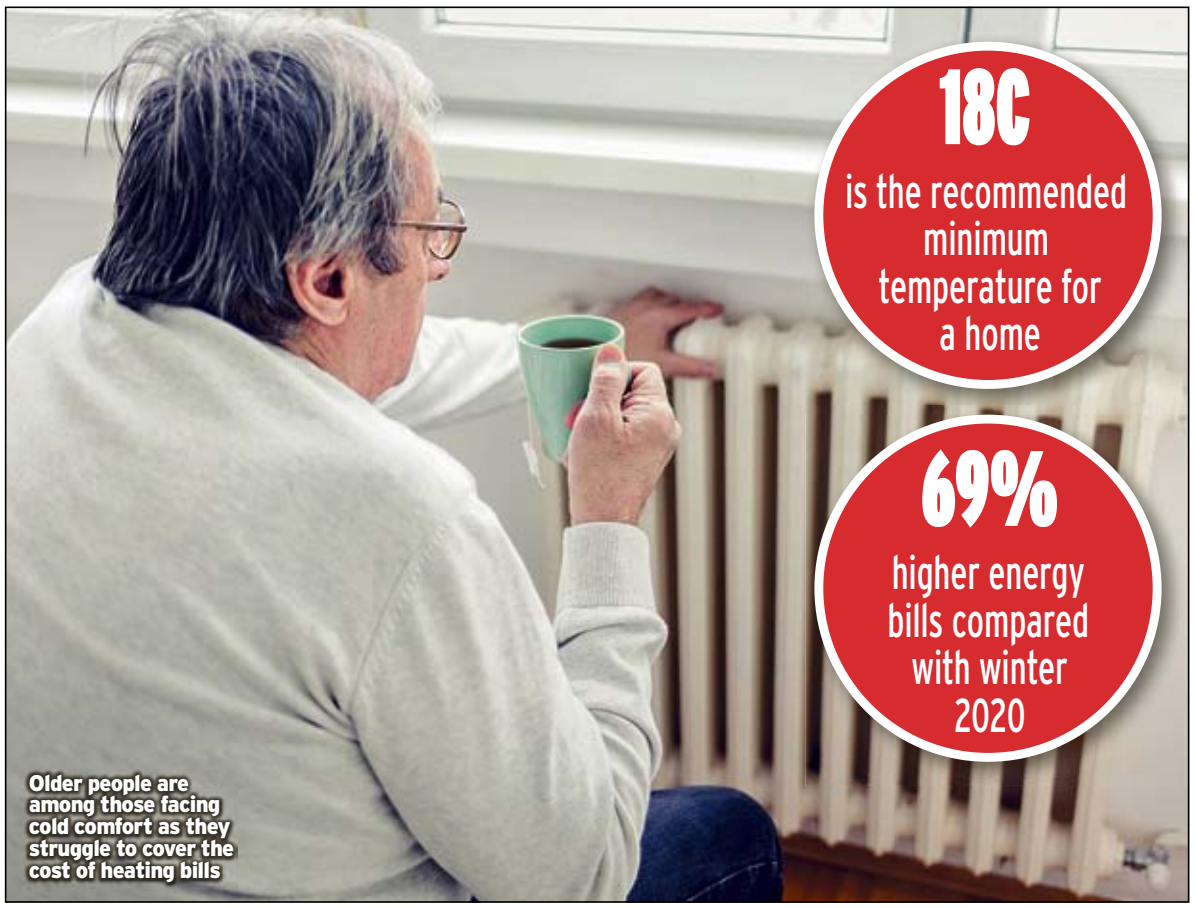


Older people are among those facing cold comfort as they struggle to cover the cost of heating bills

Pensioners 'shunned' in digital ID bid

BritCard proposed by the PM

CAMPAIGNERS have accused the government of showing "utter contempt" to pensioners over its digital ID scheme.

Elderly campaign group Silver Voices issued a fresh warning to ministers ahead of a consultation due to take place in the new year.

Sir Keir Starmer announced his plans for digital ID in September to curb migrants working illegally and to make it "easier for the vast majority of people to use vital government services".

But Silver Voices director Dennis Reed said: "The 4.5 million people who do not possess a smartphone and the two million households who are offline are being told that unless they wise up to the digital revolution, they can forget having access to many private and public services in the future.

"The failure of the government to even think about the digitally excluded before announcing its compulsory digital ID plans shows utter contempt for the most vulnerable sections of the community."

BY **KATIE HARRIS**
Senior Political Correspondent

Under the plans, digital ID will be mandatory in order to work in the UK in a bid to crack down on illegal immigration.

Inclusion

But Sir Keir has insisted people who opt not to have it will not be denied access to key services.

The Prime Minister's chief secretary Darren Jones sparked fears when he suggested digital ID could be "the bedrock of the modern state".

Almost three million people have signed a petition on the official Parliament website against the introduction of digital ID. And a YouGov poll showed public support for digital ID plummeted after the Prime Minister's announcement in September. The proposals have also come under fire from the Tories, Reform UK and the Lib Dems.

The government said: "We will launch a major inclusion drive which will look at providing face-to-face support and hands-on help for those who need it.

"Making this system work for everyone will be a top priority, including people who often struggle to access modern services, whether that's because of their age, economic status or lack of digital skills.

"The new scheme will be inclusive, secure and useful.

"It will give people more control over their data than they have now, and make public services easier to access and serve everyone better across the country."

Three held over car roof death horror

BY **POL ALLINGHAM**

THREE men have been held after a pedestrian in his 80s died after being hit by a Mercedes estate car and carried on top of it for as much a mile.

The man was struck on the A289 Gads Hill in Gillingham, Kent, just after midday on Monday.

He was found around a mile from where he was hit, Kent Police said.

The car was found nearby and the two occupants fled on foot.

Local resident Ralph Belmonte said a postman who found the body on the road had thought it was a dummy strapped to the car roof.

Mr Belmonte, 69, said: "And as he went to turn [it] over he realised it was actually a body."

CCTV showed two hooded men in dark clothing, one appearing to run while carrying a number plate.

A man of 29 from Chatham and a 28-year-old of no fixed address were held on Monday.

A man of 28 from Edgware, north-west London, was arrested yesterday and remained in custody, the force said.

Plane crash body found at reservoir

BY **ELLIE CRABBE**

A MAN'S body has been pulled out of a reservoir after a small private plane crash landed.

The aircraft, a Beagle B121 Pup, left North Weald Airfield in Essex, just before noon on Sunday, flight logs show.

Yesterday afternoon the body was recovered by divers, Essex Police said. The pilot is believed to have been the sole occupant of the aircraft.

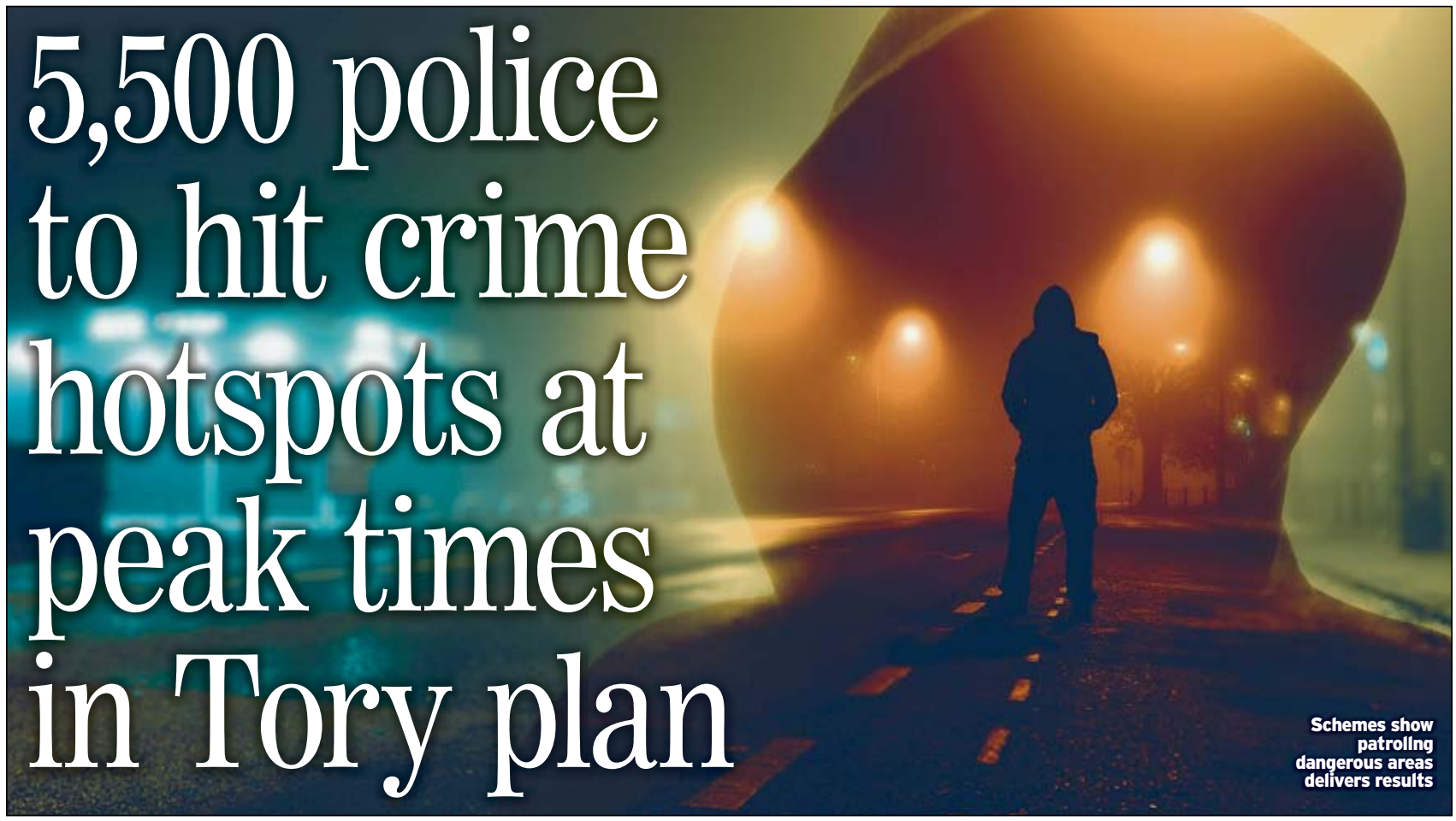
It added there were no suspicious circumstances.

Chief Superintendent Waheed Khan said: "I would firstly like to recognise that someone has lost their life in tragic circumstances. Our thoughts remain with everyone affected by this incident.

"Work to formally identify this man will be undertaken sensitively with HM Coroner, and it is not right that we officially confirm his identity until this procedure is followed.

"We believe this is the body of the sole occupant of the aircraft and our search activity has therefore concluded," he added.

5,500 police to hit crime hotspots at peak times in Tory plan



Schemes show patrolling dangerous areas delivers results

NEIGHBOURHOODS where violence, robbery and antisocial behaviour are most likely to occur have been identified as predictable "hotspots" – often flaring on the same days of the week or at the same times.

A study found a quarter of stop and searches in London take place in just 2.2% of neighbourhoods and only 1.2% in Greater Manchester.

The analysis – compiled by the Conservatives – underpins plans to deploy officers to patrol the 2,000 most crime-hit areas if the party wins the next general election.

Some 5,500 police will be used during the "40 highest-risk hours each week" because a "small number of streets" and areas "generate a disproportionate amount of violence and disorder".

The Tories will also tell forces to deploy live facial recognition technology "routinely" in high-crime areas. Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp said: "A small number of streets and neighbourhoods generate a disproportionate amount of violence and disorder.

"Hotspot policing recognises that by putting officers exactly where and when crime is most likely to happen.

BY **MICHAEL KNOWLES**
Home Affairs Editor

Violence

"Sustained patrols in high-risk areas interrupt repeat offending, deter opportunistic crime, and rebuild confidence for residents who too often feel forgotten. That is why forces that have taken this approach have seen real reductions in violence and antisocial behaviour. The next Conservative government will make this common-sense approach standard practice.

"Officers on the ground, week in, week out, in the places that need them most, supported by technology designed to catch criminals.

"This is practical, evidence-led policing to deliver safer streets."

2,000 high-crime areas patrolled may cut 35,000 offences, say planners

Party officials said a hotspot patrol scheme in Essex, which targeted 13 areas that were known for antisocial behaviour, led to an 8.7% fall – the equivalent to 1,420 fewer offences.

Strategists believe that patrolling 2,000 areas – which account for one in four of all serious violent crimes and robberies – will prevent 35,000 potential offences.

They have vowed to triple the use of stop and search powers, taking it back to "2008 levels".

The Tories said: "We would achieve this using the Home Secretary's new power to set operational priorities and changing PACE Code A 2.8A and College of Policing guidance to make clear that a single suspicion indicator is enough to merit stop and search. This includes the smell of cannabis.

"We would mandate the more widespread use of Section 60 suspicion-less stop and searches in high-crime areas."

Senior lawyers 'concerned' over jury cuts

BARRISTERS from across Britain and Ireland have said they are "deeply concerned" by government plans to curb the number of jury trials.

The "Four Bars" – the bodies representing barristers in the UK and the Republic of Ireland – have weighed in on the reforms being spearheaded by Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy.

Mr Lammy, also the Justice Secretary, wants to limit jury trials to only the most serious offences, and those with a likely sentence of more than three years in prison.

Ministers hope that reducing the number of jury trials will help to clear the backlog of cases in the criminal courts system. But the plans have been met with widespread criticism.

The proposals followed an independent review by Sir Brian Leveson, a retired Court of Appeal judge, who recommended a form of jury-free trial as part of a series of "fundamental" reforms to the courts. But the four bar councils warned the government's plans go beyond what Sir Brian recommended.

BY **DAVID LYNCH**

In a joint statement, they said: "The Four Bars are deeply concerned that the UK government is planning to restrict the right to a jury trial in England and Wales.

"Being tried by a jury of one's peers is a fundamental cornerstone of the criminal justice system in our respective jurisdictions."

They claimed there was "no evidence that this fundamental change will bring down the existing crown court backlog", adding: "The proposal also goes further than Sir Brian Leveson's recommendation, which itself has not been piloted nor thoroughly modelled.

"Importantly, he alerts the Ministry of Justice to the desirability of further detailed analysis before implementation."

They concluded: "The Four Bars stand as one in opposition to this proposal. Legislation is still some time away – the Government has time to listen to the views we express and to change course."

The statement was signed by Barbara Mills KC, chairwoman of the Bar Council of England and Wales; Roddy Dunlop KC, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates in Scotland; Donal Lunny KC, chairman of the Bar of Northern Ireland; and Sean Guerin SC, chairman of the Bar of Ireland.

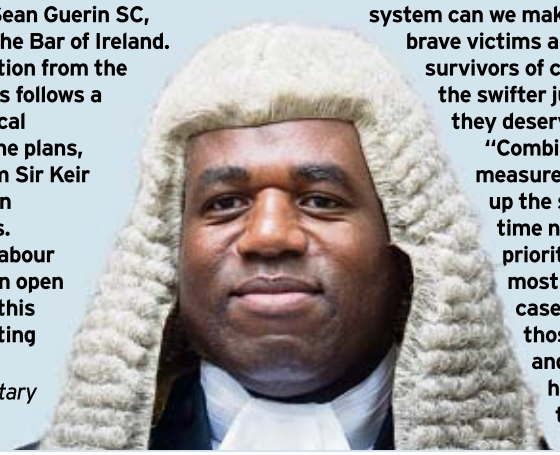
The opposition from the senior lawyers follows a wave of political criticism of the plans, including from Sir Keir Starmer's own backbenchers.

Some 39 Labour MPs signed an open letter earlier this month indicating that they were willing to vote down the proposals in the Commons.

Karl Turner, the Labour MP for Hull East who co-ordinated the letter, said "many more" than those who signed the letter were also willing to rebel.

An MoJ spokesman said: "Only through these crucial reforms, the extra investment we will deliver, and our drive to increase efficiency in the system can we make sure brave victims and survivors of crime get the swifter justice they deserve.

"Combined, these measures will free up the space and time needed to prioritise the most serious cases, including those that can and should have a jury trial."



Justice Secretary David Lammy

TO READ ALL THE BEST POLITICAL STORIES OF THE DAY GO TO EXPRESS.CO.UK/POLITICS

Singer and dancer Beyonce

Beyonce now a billionaire, says Forbes

BY **CARLA FERIC**

BEYONCE has been declared a billionaire by Forbes, and is the fifth musician to join its list of the wealthiest people in the world.

The others are her husband Jay-Z, Taylor Swift, Rihanna and Bruce Springsteen.

Single Ladies singer Beyonce, 44, who is the most decorated artist in Grammy history, grossed nearly £444million on her 2023 Renaissance World Tour.

A film of the performance, which she distributed directly with the US cinema chain AMC, saw her pocket nearly half of its £32m global box office gross.

And this year's Cowboy Carter tour racked up £296m in ticket sales and £37m from merchandise.

Amal and George Clooney

Clooneys take French citizenship

BY **PETER ALLEN**

GEORGE Clooney, wife Amal and their children have become French citizens, according to an official decree published in Paris.

Their eight-year-old twins Ella and Alexander will also now have French passports.

The US actor, 64, and his British-Lebanese lawyer wife, 47, bought a wine estate in the south of France in 2021.

The 2017 birth of Ella and Alexander was announced by the Hollywood star on French TV, and he has frequently praised the country's privacy laws.

George told French radio in December: "I love the French culture, your language...

"Here, they don't take photos of kids. That's number one for us."

Travel chaos as power failure shuts Chunnel

Passengers at St Pancras hit by Eurostar cancellations

Drivers stuck waiting to take LeShuttle. Right, Eurostar trains were also affected

BY **SIMON MURPHY**

THOUSANDS of getaways were ruined when the Channel Tunnel was shut for hours by a power supply problem and a failed train.

Eurostar told passengers to re-book for a different date and avoid London St Pancras station if their train's cancellation was confirmed. Trains were running again later in the day but there were still significant delays and cancellations last night.

Drivers planning to use the LeShuttle rail service through the tunnel also faced travel chaos, with lengthy traffic jams approaching the terminal in Folkestone, Kent. LeShuttle passenger Tim Brown spent more than three hours stuck on the train at the Calais terminal.

John Paul, 46, of Peterborough, Cambs, and partner Lucy spent five hours on a Paris-bound Eurostar, which returned to London. He said: "We were about an hour down the track when they said the train's got to stop because the train ahead has got a braking issue."

The trip was a Christmas present from Lucy and the couple had a river cruise and trip to the Eiffel Tower booked for yesterday evening.

Mr Paul said: "We'll have to put romance on hold for a while."

Charles Nduka-Eze, from Nigeria, and his family were also taken back to London. They had hoped to spend New Year at Disneyland Paris. He said: "In a nutshell, it's a complete disaster."

A spokesman for Channel Tunnel operator Getlink said yesterday: "An incident related to the power supply to trains occurred last night in part of the Channel Tunnel, affecting train and shuttle traffic. The service is temporarily suspended in both directions."

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Joshua devastated by death of close friends

BY **PATRICK HILL**

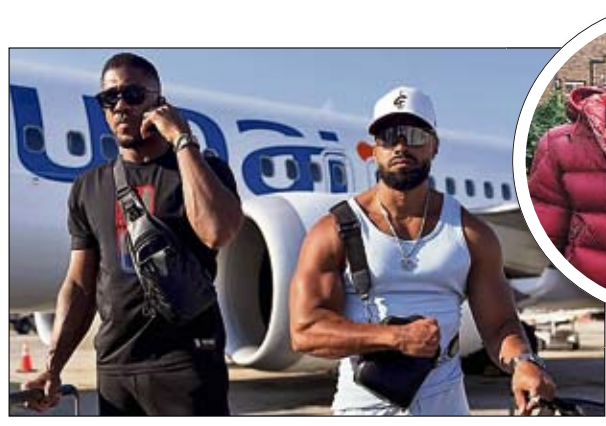
ANTHONY Joshua may never be the same after the horror crash that killed two of his closest friends, friends fear.

The former world heavyweight boxing champ and Olympic gold medallist, 36, has been joined by his mum at the Duchess International Hospital in Lagos, Nigeria, where his condition is described as stable.

His physical injuries are less serious than first feared after Monday's car crash. But friends say he could struggle to overcome the psychological trauma of the crash.

There are concerns he may not feel able to carry on his career without strength-and-conditioning coach Sina Ghami and personal trainer Latif Ayodele, both 36.

Lindsey Jacobs was among dozens of mourners who yesterday left flowers and written tributes to Sina at a gym he owned in Colindale, North West London. Joshua, known to millions as AJ, had been seen there with him on Saturday, just hours before they flew to Nigeria for a holiday.



Joshua, above with mum Yeta. Left, AJ with close friend and trainer Latif Ayodele

Caterer Lindsey, whose daughter counts the trio as friends, said: "How AJ is going to cope without them I don't know. I don't think he can go on without his two best mates.

"They were best friends. Like family. The three of them were inseparable. He relied on them for everything. I don't think he's going to cope." Well-wishers from boxing, including rival Tyson Fury, were among those to send support. Fury, 37, whose proposed £100million super-fight with Joshua later this year is now in doubt, added: "This is so sad. May God give them a good bed in heaven."

Joshua, who has Nigerian heritage, came within inches of death in the back seat of the Lexus SUV when it hit a stationary truck on Monday. Police are probing claims a tyre blow-out, caused by excessive speed during overtaking, may have been to blame.

Sina and Latif, who were sitting on the same side of the Lexus, are believed to have died instantly.

It is understood Joshua was behind the driver, along with another passenger. Joshua's injuries have been described as "minor" after initial reports they were more serious.

Sina was a key figure in Joshua's corner during several landmark bouts, including his 2017 victory over Ukrainian Wladimir Klitschko at Wembley Stadium. Later that year, he co-founded Evolve Gym.

Latif was a former non-League footballer with teams including Aylesbury United, Tooting & Mitcham United, and Northwood.

The crash happened on the notoriously dangerous 80-mile Lagos-Ibadan Expressway which has claimed 73 lives in the past three months and 645 deaths over the past two years.

Labour ‘sowing seeds of its own destruction’ if it does not change tack

‘Inevitable’ PM will go, says union boss

Sharon Graham of Unite

BY **KATIE HARRIS**
Senior Political Correspondent

KEIR Starmer being replaced as Labour leader is “inevitable”, a union chief has declared.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham warned that the government is risking “sowing the seeds of its own destruction” if it does not change course.

And she added that a new Labour leader with the same agenda also “won’t cut it” as she called for the scrapping of net-zero policies and the introduction of a wealth tax.

Ms Graham said: “There is much agonising right now about whether, when and who should replace the Prime Minister. That is inevitable. But a new Labour leader with the same policies won’t cut it.”

Describing the country as “rudderless”, she added: “The government needs to decide what it stands for and who it stands for. If we have to ask, it is not working.

“The doom loop cannot be broken with more ‘austerity lite’, no matter who is in Downing Street.

“Britain needs vision. We led the first industrial revolution.

“In the coming year, if this government does not depart from its current path, it will surely be sowing the seeds of its own destruction.”

Ms Graham’s intervention comes as relations between Labour and its biggest trade union backer have been deteriorating.

Tensions erupted shortly after Sir Keir entered No10 in July last year over plans to axe winter fuel payments for most pensioners – on which Labour was forced into a U-turn.

There have also been reports that Unite could hold a historic vote on splitting from Labour.

Meanwhile, the PM is facing questions over his future ahead of the May local elections, which are set to be a bloodbath for the ruling party.

Ms Graham warned simply changing personnel will not alter anything unless they undertake a policy shift, calling on Labour to borrow more and act as the “voice of workers”.

She wrote in The Times: “Replacing Keir with Angela [Rayner, the former Deputy Prime Minister], Andy [Burnham, mayor of Greater Manchester], Wes [Streeting, the Health Secretary] or Ed [Miliband, the Energy Secretary] won’t persuade workers to return to the fold if they are just offering more of the same in a different voice.”

And criticising last month’s Budget, she added: “Labour opting for stealth taxes on workers instead of a wealth tax on the mega-rich was the wrong choice.”

Pressure is growing on Sir Keir Starmer

Afghan man arrested after five people assaulted at hospital

BY **ELEANOR BARLOW**

AN Afghan man was arrested yesterday after five people were attacked in a hospital.

Officers were called to Newton Community Hospital in Newton-Le-Willows, St Helens, just after noon yesterday following a report that a man had assaulted people with a weapon, Merseyside Police said.

The force said the man was believed to have attended the hospital to request an appointment but became “increasingly agitated” when his request was declined.

He was reported to have damaged a counter before assaulting people with a weapon that may have been a crowbar, a police spokesman said.

A 20-year-old man, originally from Afghanistan, was arrested on suspicion of five counts of wounding, affray and criminal damage. Injuries to victims were not life-threatening.

Police secure hospital in St Helens

Superintendent Sarah Rotherham said: “Officers attended immediately and the male was swiftly located and arrested. Paramedics attended at the hospital and carried out first aid to those who had been injured.”

Anyone who witnessed the incident is asked to contact Merseyside Police or call Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111.

New Year swimmers urged to stay safe after Christmas tragedy

SWIMMERS planning to celebrate the new year with an open water dip are warned to be aware of the risks.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution said the effects of cold water shock, combined with weather conditions, pose a risk to anyone entering water that is 15C or below – especially at a time of year when the average sea temperature is 6C to 10C.

The warning follows the disappearance of Matthew Upham, 63, and another man during a Christmas Day swim in the Devon seaside town of Budleigh Salterton.

BY **MATHILDE GRANDJEAN**

Gareth Morrison, head of water safety for the RNLI, said yesterday: "We are urging anyone entering the water to be aware of the dangers, check sea conditions carefully and to understand their own limitations.

"If it's your first time in open water, we'd recommend you speak to your GP first.

"Avoid swimming alone, consider going with others or joining a group. Think about the depth of water – wherever possible, stay in your depth. We'd recommend wearing a wetsuit to keep you warm and increase your buoyancy, together with a bright swim cap and tow float to make yourself visible to others and use in an emergency."

Mr Upham and the other man aged in his 40s reportedly went missing after entering the water to help a woman in difficulty.

A number of people were rescued from the stormy water and checked by paramedics or taken to hospital as a precaution, but the two men were not located.

Mr Morrison said anyone who spots a swimmer in difficulty should call emergency services instead of going into the water.

"The most important thing to remember is if you are in any doubt, stay out of the water and if you or anyone else does get into trouble in or on the water please call 999 or 112 and ask for the Coastguard," he said.

Festive folk enjoy a Christmas Eve paddle at Cullercoats Bay, North Tyneside

Meals will help healthy diet

M&S's new meals range a weight off for patients

BY **JOSIE CLARKE**

MARKS & Spencer is launching a range of meals and snacks to help those on weight-loss medication maintain a healthy diet.

It's Nutrient Dense line of 20 products is formulated to meet customers' recommended daily amounts of fibre, vitamins and minerals.

M&S claims the meals are ideal for those with a lower appetite or people on GLP-1 weight-loss medication (such as Wegovy and Mounjaro).

The launch follows a dramatic rise in the number of people using weight-loss drugs.

Some 2.49m packs of Mounjaro and Wegovy were purchased in July – up from 493,000 the previous year – reported the Telegraph, using figures from life science analytics firm IQVIA.

Between July and August, sales jumped by an additional million, amid widespread reports of stockpiling ahead of a September price rise.

The Nutrient Dense range is available in M&S from January 5.

Headaches and coughs causing pain for A&E

BY **ELLA PICKOVER** AND **IAN JONES**

MILLIONS of patients are turning to A&Es for minor conditions, including headaches.

In five years, medics in the casualty units dealt with almost 1.9 million cases of people seeking help for headaches.

Almost 1.4m A&E visits in England in 2020-21 to 2024-25 were due to coughs, and 1.2m for sore throats.

One million were for earache, Press Association analysis showed.

Some 69,000 patients sought help in A&E for blocked noses, 4,200 for hiccups and 290,000 for constipation.

The 2020-21 year covers the first 12 months of the pandemic, when many patients steered clear of hospitals.

Unnecessary

Figures also show how A&E attendances for emergencies – such as heart attacks – stayed relatively consistent during and since Covid.

For example, 10,293 attendances due to cardiac arrest were logged in 2020-21, with 10,744 in 2024-25.

Some 2.2m attendees were found to have "no abnormality detected" in 2024-25 while more than half a million walked out before a diagnosis.

Health officials have warned of a "tidal wave" of winter illnesses sweeping the NHS.

The NHS has said A&Es face significant "unnecessary" admissions that could have been handled by GPs or pharmacists.

Rory Deighton, NHS Confederation acute and community care director, said: "The NHS fully supports the government's ambition to move more care closer to home, and this shift will play a crucial part of helping patients manage their conditions more effectively without needing to go to hospital."

Over 1.4m patients in A&Es with coughs

Daniel Elkeles, NHS Providers CEO, said: "Patients choosing to attend A&E for help with relatively simple conditions like earache lays bare a failure to give people enough access to convenient, responsive services closer to home."

Royal College of Emergency Medicine president Dr Ian Higginson said: "People are arriving through the doors of emergency departments with issues that we would not traditionally consider as 'urgent' and require emergency care.

Community

"This is a symptom of the healthcare system not working as it was designed to."

National Pharmacy Association CEO Henry Gregg said: "Millions of hours are spent waiting in A&E for minor issues that can instead be treated in a community pharmacy."

An NHS England spokesperson urged people with non-urgent conditions to call the NHS 111 line or visit it online. They added: "The last place a patient wants to be when they have a minor illness is a busy A&E – that's why this winter NHS staff are working hard to expand the number of routes into the health service.

"We have launched a campaign urging people to use the range of alternatives to A&E to get them the help they need in the most appropriate place."

500 NEW AMBULANCES JOIN FRONT LINE FIGHTING PATIENT DELAYS

BY **ELLA PICKOVER**

A NEW fleet of ambulances has been unveiled to help strengthen the frontline response to health emergencies this winter.

More than 500 ambulances, costing more than £75million, have been distributed across England.

Officials said the new arrivals are the "biggest upgrade to the NHS ambulance fleet in recent years".

The double-crew vehicles are fitted with modern navigation technology and safety equipment.

The Department of Health said the rollout is already improving frontline care as breakdown rates have reduced.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting said: "Having a modern ambulance fleet is absolutely essential for making sure we improve our urgent and emergency care services. We came in to find an NHS that was not only broken by our predecessors, but often left crumbling, whether that's the estate and kit, or indeed, our vehicles, and that's why this investment really matters."

Ambulance waiting times have reduced

Jason Killens, Association of Ambulance Chief Executives chairman, said of the new vehicles: "They are more reliable so they stay on the road where they are needed, come with a range of design features which improve patient care and staff safety, and as they are lighter, use less fuel and produce fewer emissions. These vehicles are an important part of the modernisation of ambulance fleets around the country to ensure we are able to meet the needs of patients not just this winter, but in the years ahead."

The latest weekly snapshot of hospitals in England shows an improvement in the time ambulances are left queuing outside hospitals.

Some 28% of patients arriving by ambulance in England in the week ending December 14 waited at least 30 minutes to be handed over to A&E teams – down from 32% the previous week.

And 9% of ambulance handovers – 8,175 patients – that week were delayed by more than an hour, down from 12%.

Separate figures for November show the average response time for ambulances dealing with the most urgent incidents was eight minutes and one second. This is unchanged from October and is above the target standard response time of seven minutes.

DAILY EXPRESS

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EU judges sticking their beaks in UK's business

IF ONE case highlights how Britain remains shackled to the whims of Europe it is that of jihadi bride Shamima Begum. The European Court of Human Rights has demanded the government explains its decision to remove her citizenship after she fled to Syria as a 15-year-old to join Islamic State terrorists.

It is seeking to know whether Article 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights – which prohibits slavery, servitude, forced labour and trafficking – was violated.

In 2019, former Home Secretary Sajid Javid stripped Begum of her citizenship on national security grounds. Ever since, she has tried numerous times to return to the UK.

Until now none of her attempts to reinstate her citizenship has been successful and she is being held in a prison camp in Syria controlled by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

Now judges sitting in Strasbourg as part of the Council of Europe have stuck their beaks in our business. No wonder Begum and her lawyers are delighted.

Shadow Justice Secretary Robert Jenrick says Begum chose to get involved in terrorism and must now live with the consequences.

He insists that interference by the court is another glaring example of why the UK should cut ties with the ECHR.

We should all be deeply concerned at the continuing meddling of overseas judges in our affairs. Human rights law has been stretched way beyond its original meaning and intent.

It is no wonder the clamour for us to cut and run grows by the day.

Triple lock must remain

WINTER is an especially frightening time for pensioners and is often a choice between heating their homes or eating, but rarely both.

Few have felt the continuing cost-of-living crisis more acutely than old folk who are forced to absorb soaring food and fuel costs, surviving on meagre fixed incomes.

Three million OAPs are already struggling to keep their homes warm. It is why this government, which has form when it comes to targeting pensioners, should take notice, listen, and commit to protect the pension triple lock.

Older people, many disproportionately living in ill health, need to keep their homes warm to stand a chance of staying well. If that isn't blindingly obvious to ministers, perhaps they should realise failure to adequately care for older folk could cost taxpayers much more if they need to call on a GP or end up in A&E.

This country has a duty to look after OAPs. That is why this newspaper will never stop campaigning on their behalf on a multitude of issues, not least the necessity to protect the triple lock. Penny pinching to justify other spending is no way to run social policy.

New Year plans derailed

THERE are few certainties in this world but a transport failure at one of the busiest travel times of the year is a safe bet.

Those hoping to escape to France and beyond for the new year had their plans scuppered after Eurostar services were suspended because of a power outage.

Instead of enjoying a relaxing getaway to Paris or Brussels, passengers instead found themselves on the road to Rouen.

In Labour's twisted world, those who hate us are welcome

Epyptian activist Alaa Abd el-Fattah and his mother

Tim Newark
Political commentator

VISITING Cairo earlier this year, I was told by local taxi drivers that Britain is notorious for harbouring Islamist radicals. This poor view of the UK from the average Egyptian up to the higher echelons of their government, has been only reinforced by Sir Keir Starmer giving sanctuary to Alaa Abd el-Fattah who has called for the death of police and Zionists and clearly hates Britain.

We are not winning any friends in the Middle East by continuing to harbour enemies of the Arab world and the West.

In fact, we are seen as the dupes of Islamists who use this country as a safe base for encouraging attacks on legitimate governments in Muslim countries while, at the same time, loathing the nation that gives them sanctuary.

The desperate Tory and, latterly, Labour campaign to get el-Fattah out of jail served only to embarrass the Egyptian government and shows how poor we are at understanding the reality of Middle Eastern politics. Deluded Starmer prefers to alienate Israel and moderate Islamic countries in order to satisfy some perverted sense of human rights.

Again and again, Labour likes to put Islamist activists above our own international interests. Human Rights law is used to protect dangerous individuals at the cost of our own domestic and international security.

WE ARE, frankly, the laughing stock of the Middle East, allowing US President Donald Trump to play a far more sophisticated game of diplomacy, bringing on-side rich moderate Arab states alongside Israel. By doing this he has secured peace in the Middle East and made the US chief beneficiaries of any international business deals.

Instead, Britain gets nothing, just a whole load of dangerous activists who despise our way of life in exchange for some abstract notion of virtue.

When will Labour grandees – and Left-leaning Tories – understand that virtue doesn't protect us or make us wealthy? Many Labour MPs are rightly furious at being deceived by supposedly more informed senior figures, such as government foreign adviser Jonathan Powell, who think they are some latter day Lawrence of Arabia, ingratiating themselves with extremists bringing only hatred to our shores. The last thing we need is more antisemitism and yet open borders and granting citizenship to activists like el-Fattah only makes Jews feel less at home.

Tweets from el-Fattah have emerged in which he says: "I am racist, I don't like white people," explaining "killing any colonialists and specially Zionists [is] heroic, we need to kill more of them".

Why are we granting citizenship to people like that? Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper says ministers were ill-informed by civil servants about the extent of his social media history. But this is the same Foreign Office that has been notoriously Arabist for years, welcoming the Muslim Brotherhood's disastrous brief reign in Egypt in 2012, despite it decimating Egypt's tourist industry and impoverishing citizens.

Egyptians I met earlier this year are baffled at why we allow revolutionary extremists into our country. Not only that, but we apparently positively rejoice at it.

Earlier this week, our Prime Minister declared he was "delighted" and "we welcome the return of a British citizen unfairly detained abroad".

El-Fattah was imprisoned in 2019 on charges of "spreading false news" after sharing a Facebook post about torture, but he also played a key role in the 2011 Egyptian protests that ousted the former president and brought the Muslim Brotherhood to power.

THIS diplomatic farce just reinforces the appalling judgment of this Labour government. These are the same people giving away our Chagos Islands base that only benefits our rivals in the world. We are, plainly, being led by politicians who do not have our best interests at heart and would always prefer to suck up to any anti-Western foreigner as long as it impresses their human rights buddies.

Our once-respected position in the world is rapidly dissipating as we alienate Israel and moderate Arab countries by continuing to grant safe haven to virulent Islamists. Yet again, senior Labour figures, such as Emily Thornberry, say it is impossible to now deport el-Fattah, using the law to bind our hands.

When will Labour politicians ever consider British interests first? Clearly, we are now second-class citizens in our own country and will only continue to welcome malign figures so long as it pleases the twisted values of the Labour Party.

'Egyptians are baffled at why we allow extremists into our country'

Vanessa Feltz

FROM THE HEART

Living the dream in 2026

I'm not giving up on finding true love and am prepared to kiss a few frogs along the way to find my prince. I will also remain faithful to my features but may review that in 12 months' time!

GENTLE reader, you might think after decades of columns bristling with good intentions, most of which have bitten the dust by mid-February, I'd have learned to keep my resolutions to myself. I haven't. I still hope writing down hopes and promises in black-and-white for all the world to see will make it more difficult for me to leap off the waggon and spend 2026 snuggled under the duvet with a box of chocolate biscuits, and shirking all challenges, like a comfortably ensconced sloth.

So, with all the resolve I can muster, I lay my dreams under your feet. As Yeats once disarmingly wrote: "Tread softly because you tread on my dreams."

★I will not give up on finding true love. Mr Right may have been just a trifle elusive thus far, but that doesn't mean he isn't twinkling somewhere beyond yonder star.

I must find that star, follow it (maybe on Instagram) and he'll be there, smiling, re-reading a Philip Roth novel and impatiently waiting for me.

★If I unearth a few more frogs along the way, I undertake to remain optimistic and jolly. Turn bitter and twisted and even potential Prince Charmings morph into moist green amphibians. Vogue magazine says boyfriends are an embarrassment.

One by one my pals are announcing they've "done with" dating, can't be bothered being half of a pair and are as happy without a man as a fish is without a bicycle. That's fine for them, but it isn't for me. I will resist pressure to proclaim my delight in singledom.

I don't find it delightful. This isn't the moment to bend to peer pressure and pretend. I would like someone special to share my life with and I owe it to myself to have a vigorous bash at finding him.

★If 2026 turns out to be a romance desert, I will pack it with lashings of fun and frolics anyway. Work/life balance went wildly awry in 2025. I worked seven days a week for 32 weeks. I presented five weekday Vanessa shows on Channel 5 and two LBC radio shows on Saturdays and Sundays.

I spent just nine nights out of 365 in the house I bought after decades of toil in beloved East Cork. Time twirled like a frenetic kaleidoscope. Without weekends, it's always Thursday. I forgot how to do leisure. I must get a grip and carve out a decent swathe of days to fritter away.

★Being absurdly busy means slotting friends old and new into tiny slivers of the clock, trying to stop relationships ebbing away entirely. In 2026 I'll make hanging out with pals a priority not a hastily arranged afterthought.

★Until last month, I'd never been to Exmoor. Why not? How could I have lived 63 years in this green and pleasant land without pausing at Porlock or strolling through the perfectly perfect medieval village of Dunster?

Now I've seen what I've been missing, I'm stunned by my own inertia. Why haven't I spent every spare second exploring? Now I'm determined to go a-roving.

Grand-babies become grand-people in the blink of an eye. Mine are now nearly 12, 10, six, and three and the whole baby thing is already a fleeting memory.

My descendants are hilarious, insightful, idiosyncratic individuals with views – which may not tally with mine – on everything from recycling to what constitutes a good musical. Instead of bestowing the benefits of my experience upon them, I'm going to turn the teach/learn model upside down and do my utmost to grasp whatever they are prepared to teach me. So far, it's good stuff and I'm not at all keen on being a wise old owl, convinced I know everything. I'd far rather tune in to their passions and find out something I hadn't bargained for.

★Hang fire on the facelift. I know Kardashian "momager" Kris Jenner astounded the world with her staggeringly youthful facelift. She looks younger and prettier than she did in her 20s and she's just rolled out the barrel for an all -singing all-dancing jamboree, with Harry and Meghan on her 70th celebration guest-list.

She's being mistaken for one of her own daughters. Seeing my wattle neck wobbling on the telly isn't bliss, but I'm wary of going under the knife and waking up lopsided or downright weird. I'll be faithful to my own features but will review in 12 months if the Lord spares me.

★*Doing stuff with and for other people makes you feel warm and fuzzy inside and can be a terrific lark. I was a judge at a feisty and fabulous charity fundraising version of Strictly. The tears, laughter and true grit were inspiring. Good causes are serious. Raising money for them can be a hoot.*

Duck miserable films, likewise wretched books about hideous childhoods and dystopian futures. I know what I like: fascinatingly glamorous folk in exquisite outfits discussing philosophy and feelings before living happily ever after. If it's meant to be entertainment, I want to be entertained, not wrenched hither and yon on a harrowing journey to Hades. If it doesn't perk me up, I'm not shelling out.

★Bite my lip and keep shtum. Personal remarks, even those we mums and grandmas think are carefully crafted not to offend: "I love your hair that way." "Why don't you always do it like that?" can be misinterpreted as swingeing criticisms.

It's far better to smile beatifically and keep your thoughts to yourself. I fully intend to take my own excellent advice, though regular readers will know I make this promise every year and fail spectacularly.

★Have adventures. I won't limit myself to projects with an ending I can predict. I'd rather embark on something which might turn out to surprise me. When I find out what it is, I'll let you know. This year it was my spoof on the Duchess of Sussex's Netflix lifestyle show "With Love, Vanessa xx". The "festive episodes" are roaring up the YouTube charts. Who knew?

Wishing you all a happy, healthy and prosperous 2026. With all my love,

Vanessa xx

See pages 18-19 for more takes on the year by your favourite Express columnists

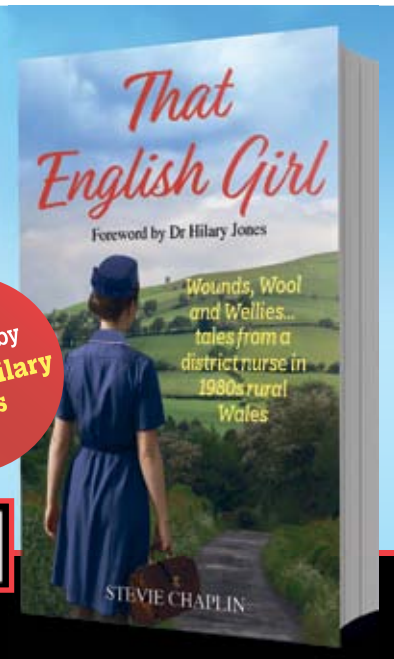
DAILY EXPRESSO SEE HOST JJ ANISIOBI AND GUESTS IN NEW EPISODES MONDAY TO FRIDAY ON THE EXPRESS YOUTUBE CHANNEL

DX1ST

TALES OF A DISTRICT NURSE IN 1980s RURAL WALES

She arrived as a stranger in a different land. She emerged wiser with great friends - and an incredible recipe for Welsh cakes!

Foreword by ITV's Dr Hilary Jones


That English Girl
Foreword by Dr Hilary Jones
Wounds, Wool and Wellies... tales from a district nurse in 1980s rural Wales
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Frances Millar

To be frank...

IF YOU have ever tried to cancel a monthly subscription you didn't mean to sign up for, you will know the hot shame of allowing yourself to be duped. Maybe, like me, you've found yourself in the small hours drafting increasingly officious, sternly worded emails in your head. Or googling, "what is the difference between an ombudsman and Trading Standards" and "what the hell is an ombudsman?" There really should be a specialist 24-hour crisis line.

It always starts so innocently: "Click here for a free trial. It's super easy, and absolutely no strings attached!" Against your better judgement, you think: "Go on then, but I know your game. You're not going to catch me out." Oh, you wally. You may as well sign your name in blood. Months later you notice payments are going out. There does not appear to be an email trail. The password isn't saved, and of course, you can't remember it.

It could be one of a dozen variations you've cycled through over the years. So you reset it with yet another password you'll immediately forget.

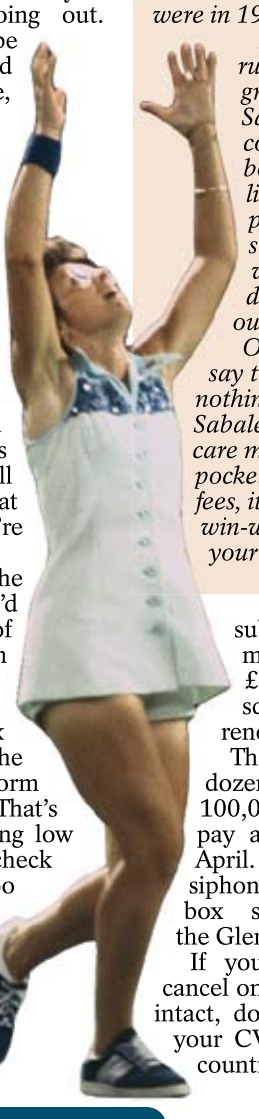
Funnily enough, there's no button marked: "Click here for a full refund and a guarantee we will never darken your doorstep again." Instead, there is a labyrinth of hidden menus and an endless doom-scroll of terms and conditions that always concludes that you're in the wrong.

Last year, I had the misfortune of discovering I'd forked out six months of payments for a film streaming service I'd used once. And yes, OK, it was my fault for clicking a box or not clicking a box, but the company neglected to inform me the service was active. That's how they get you. By lying low and hoping you won't check your bank statements too closely.

According to a survey, the new year will bring a surge of people determined to save a few pounds by ditching underused subscriptions. Not a moment too soon, as £1.6billion a year is squandered on unwanted renewals.

That could buy a couple of dozen F-35 fighter jets, or 100,000 hip replacements, or pay all our energy bills till April. Instead, it's quietly siphoned off on unwatched box sets of Monarch of the Glen.

If you've ever managed to cancel one with all your marbles intact, do us a favour and pop your CV over to GCHQ. Your country needs you.



BILLIE Jean King had everything to prove when she stepped on court against chauvinist Bobby Riggs in 1973. The original "Battle of the Sexes" was part of a wider women's rights movement, and King knew millions tuned in not to watch the tennis, but to see if women's sport would finally be taken seriously. She couldn't lose and she didn't, beating Riggs in straight sets 6-4, 6-3, 6-3.

So when a flashy Dubai match between Aryna Sabalenka and Nick Kyrgios was recently dressed up with the same title, King poured cold water on the comparison: "The only similarity is one is a boy and one is a girl. That's it. Ours was about social change; where we were in 1973. This one is not."

Far from it, modified rules meant four-time grand slam winner Sabalenka's side of the court was reduced and both players were limited to one serve per point. Yet Kyrgios still beat the women's world No. 1 6-3, 6-3, despite being ranked outside the top 600.

Outraged tennis fans say the spectacle did nothing for women's sport. Sabalenka didn't seem to care much. With both pocketing tasty appearance fees, it's a double fault or a win-win, depending on your point of view.

★ **ROAD signs to a Bedfordshire village have caused some confusion with three different spellings. The centuries-old village is variously signposted as Yelden, Yielden and Yieldon, prompting some lost motorists to start yelling in frustration, or is it yeilling? (I'll get my coat.)**

GOOGLE is giving people the chance to change their email address for the first time, while still allowing messages sent to the old address to land in the same inbox. So now you can finally apply for a job without doing it from partyboy_dave_4life@gmail.com.

frances.millar@express.co.uk

Jessie J, Ronnie Wood and Lulu all star in show

Real Hoot with Jools

Mark and Jools in the studio, ready to celebrate 2026; left, Olivia Dean

JESSIE J looks well suited to making Jools' Annual Hootenanny go with a Bang Bang tonight.

And the Express was lucky enough to join the musical bash – when it was pre-recorded on December 10.

We can confirm the party atmosphere is as authentic as it has looked on TV for more than 30 years.

Free booze helps, as does a stellar line-up. This year's bill includes Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood, Olivia Dean, Craig David, Lulu, The Kooks, Heather Small, Imelda May and the 1st Battalion Scots Guards. Kooks frontman Luke Pritchard says: "It's quite nerve-racking but in the best way. It's a proper privilege.

"And knowing you're the soundtrack to someone's night, maybe the song they're kissing to at midnight or dancing round the kitchen with their nan – that means a lot."

BY **MARK JEFFERIES**

● ***Jools' Annual Hootenanny, BBC Two and BBC iPlayer, tonight, 11.30pm.***

£225k for fire tragedy cop

BY **ROD MINCHIN**

MORE than £225,000 has been raised in donations to help a police officer whose wife and two children died in a house fire on Boxing Day.

Tom Shearman tried to rescue his family but was beaten back by the blaze that wrecked his home in Brimscombe near Stroud, Gloucestershire.

His wife, Fionnghuala, died alongside their children Eve, seven, and four-year-old son Ohner.

Mr Shearman, an officer with Gloucestershire Police, was taken to hospital for treatment but has since been discharged.

A GoFundMe campaign was launched on Sunday and more than 10,000 people have made donations.

Friend Victoria Armstrong, who set up the page, thanked those who had contributed, saying: "The loss to the families, friends and our community is almost unbearable, but what Tom has already gone through, and now faces, is unimaginable. But our wonderful community has shown that they are here for Tom and the families in a very real, very meaningful way."

Emergency services were called to a mid-terrace cottage on Brimscombe Hill at about 3am on Boxing Day.

Detective Superintendent Ian Fletcher said the mother and father were woken by the fire and had tried to reach their children in the rear bedroom. The dad tried to smash his way out through a bathroom window to reach the children's bedroom from outside, but could not get in, Det Supt Fletcher said.

Tom and Fionnghuala with their children

He then tried to return through the bathroom window but it was engulfed by flames and he was unable to get back inside to reach his family.

Det Supt Fletcher added: "We have multiple witnesses who describe the anguish he was going through, his inability to get in and save his children and save his wife. He is, as you can imagine, in a very distraught way."

Investigations were ongoing to establish the cause of the fire but it was not being treated as suspicious.

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Library's adverts must be removed

BY **PAUL JEEVES**

EYESORE adverts plastered across a historic Grade II-listed library building are to be ripped down almost five years after they were illegally put up.

It has taken a two-year legal battle, but now the government has ruled that enforcement action can begin to remove the 14 giant banners adorning a century-old site.

Bradford Council first issued the notice against the owners of the city's former Great Horton Library in March last year.

It demanded the 14 banners festooned on the culturally significant brickwork be removed within a month. But owners Uneekhomes Real Estate – based in the building – appealed, meaning no action could be taken until there was a decision.

Now, 21 months after it was lodged, a government-appointed planning inspector has thrown out the appeal.

The property dates back to 1912 and was designed and built for Bradford Corporation.

Awarding it a Grade II listing in 2007, Historic England said it had "special architectural interest in a national context as a public building designed for, and by, a local authority".

Appeal

It added: "It is well-preserved externally and internally and is of distinctive form and appearance, designed in a well-detailed Jacobean revival style, incorporating good quality relief carving."

The appellants argued the banners were needed to "safeguard the windows from public damage".

It added: "These banners serve as temporary protection until we can locate an affordable supplier to replace the current windows with identical ones. However, finding a supplier offering lead windows at a reasonable cost has proven challenging, as the price is currently prohibitively high.

"The banners were also installed on the building to indicate its active use and prevent break-ins by demonstrating the building is not abandoned."

The appeal, written in May 2024, also claims the owners were in discussion with Bradford 2025 to use the building for City of Culture events.

Instead, one of the area's finest buildings was left covered in 14 unauthorised banners throughout the entirety of the City of Culture year.

In her judgment, planning inspector Elizabeth Pleasant questioned the claims that the banners were "temporary", pointing out they had been in place since 2021 and added: "They do not appear to be a temporary measure."

Huge banners covering Grade II-listed building in Bradford

Golfing champ, Archie, 101, warns 'If you don't exercise, you die...'

A SECOND World War hero is the UK's oldest golf champion after winning a tournament – aged 101.

Archie Hemsley beat 30 elderly competitors in a nine-hole tournament to bag The Eley Trophy.

He claims his top-tier putting gave him the edge on the shortened course for the over-80s category.

It is the second time Archie, who has six grandchildren, has won the competition. During the Second World War he hunted U-Boats in the Atlantic and is now one of the last surviving

BY **ADAM DUTTON**

pilots from the Royal Navy Fleet. He made more than 100 aircraft carrier landings in his Swordfish torpedo bomber, including 40 night-time missions. Now the centenarian plays golf three times a week, after taking it up when he retired aged 50.

Archie's win at Luffenham Heath Golf Club, Rutland, comes two years after he was forced to take a break after prostate surgery. Despite his age, Archie says he still has "plenty of golfing" left in him. He said: "I was surprised to win considering I'd not played much in the last year or two.

"I'm addicted to golf. I do other exercises, I walk around the reservoir. That and golf are the secrets to a long life. If you don't exercise, you die."

Archie's coach Michael Farr said: "At the age of 101, to still have that drive to get better, is really impressive.

"I think we all look at him going out and think, 'I'd like to be like Mr Hemsley when I grow up'."

Archie is always trying to improve his technique

Archie Hemsley and in his flying days, left

Eden founder fears housing push threatens 'iconic views'

EXCLUSIVE

BY **JAMES KNUCKEY**

BRITAIN'S green spaces and cherished landscapes could become construction sites under the drive to speed up housebuilding, the co-founder of the Eden Project has warned.

Sir Tim Smit says he is "disturbed and extremely concerned" by government proposals to overhaul the planning system.

The Dutch-born British entrepreneur fears "iconic views" could be spoiled by "inappropriate buildings", while wildlife and green spaces could also be at risk as Labour tries to kick-start its 1.5 million homes pledge.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has launched a consultation on removing a number of statutory consultees from the planning process.

Among them is The Gardens Trust, the UK's only charity with a statutory responsibility to protect and conserve the heritage of designed landscapes. The Trust, of which Sir Tim is vice-president, warns "green crown jewels" are at risk.

Sir Tim, who helped to create the Lost Gardens of Heligan and Eden Project in Cornwall, says it is in the "national interest" for The Gardens Trust to retain its status.

He said: "We fully support a national agenda for creating affordable housing and want to help ensure this happens while protecting the green spaces so important to us all. By sharing expertise in understanding what makes parks and gardens so special, we can continue to make an invaluable contribution both protecting these national treasures while being allied to the aspiration of creating homes.

"We therefore suggest our continued contribution is needed in the national interest, not as a policeman acting as a brake on progress but as a guide to support and inform it."

Sir Tim warned: "Before you know it, iconic views could have inappropriate buildings in them, wildlife could be deprived of the homes they have enjoyed for hundreds of years and people could be deprived of the green spaces that they have grown up in."

The MHCLG said: "We know councils and developers report the statutory consultation system can stifle rather than facilitate sustainable development. That's why we will reform the system to ensure it is sensible, balanced and does not create unintended delays."

Sir Tim Smit has issued a stark warning

FURY AT FARMLAND HOUSING ESTATE PLANNED BY MOUNTBATTEN'S GRANDSON

RESIDENTS of a historic market town have criticised plans led by a descendant of Queen Victoria to build a huge new housing estate in "pristine" countryside.

Timothy Knatchbull, 61, a great-great-great grandson of Queen Victoria and grandson of last Viceroy of India Lord Louis Mountbatten, heads a consortium proposing to build 920 homes on farmland bordering Romsey, Hants.

The land neighbours his family's vast estate, Broadlands, where Queen Elizabeth II spent her honeymoon in 1947 and then-Prince Charles spent his honeymoon with Princess Diana in 1981.

Locals claim the town is "too small for this

BY **CHARLIE BRADLEY**

amount of extra housing", and that the plans will lead to "serious traffic issues".

They are also concerned about its effect on the "pristine countryside" and "wildlife habitats".

The Ashfield Partnership consortium originally applied to build 1,100 homes in 2022 but plans have been scaled back to 920.

The development would add around 2,500 bedrooms to the town, potentially increasing its population by up to 15%. Freelance film editor Richard Buss, 68, who has lived in the area for 35 years, claims that the developers are ignoring Test Valley Borough Council's requirement to build a footbridge over the railway line that runs next to the site to give easy pedestrian access to the town.

Another Romsey resident, Dr Mark Willett, said the influx would put a strain on already stretched services. He said: "Adding nearly 1,000 new houses will mean that somewhere in the region of 3,000 new people will move into the area. This is unsustainable."

Consortium leader Knatchbull

The year women fought back... and won!

Andrew rides a lonely path after scandal of his friendship with Epstein, above

Richard Madeley

NO ONE likes a smarta***, so let me begin by holding my hands up to my less accurate predictions for the year ahead, made this time last December.

- Ceasefire in Ukraine;
- Iran's nuclear weapons programme flattened by Israel;
- Labour to row back its attacks on UK farmers.

Hey ho. You win some, you lose some. At least I correctly predicted the continuing failure to prosecute the perfidious Post Office bosses who persecuted their blameless sub-postmasters. We're still waiting on that one (and doubtless will be 12 months from now).

I also forecast 2025 would be the year Prince Andrew (as he was still known last Christmas) would crash and burn. And that brings me to my principal prediction for 2026, because this story is trembling on the brink of going nuclear.

Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor will find himself firmly on the path to his ultimate destiny and downfall: a snug bunk behind bars in a US jail. Let me explain my thinking. Andrew has refused to respond in any way, shape or form to the US House Oversight Committee's request for him to tell them what he knows about Epstein's sexual crimes.

True, he was under no legal obligation to do so. Presumably, his disinclination to oblige stemmed from a fear he might incriminate himself during questioning. But Andrew's failure to even send a polite acknowledgement or explanation for his non-cooperation was a huge tactical error.

The tenacious Democrats on the committee will not appreciate being snubbed in this way. Their amour propre has been dented and inflamed. And as prodigious quantities of emails, photographs and other highly revealing material are being made public with the release of Epstein's personal electronic records and diaries, the former Duke of York is almost certain to be further compromised in this sordid affair. As Al Jolson once prophesied: "Folks, you ain't heard nothing yet!"

I predict this bombshell material, combined with more Epstein victims coming forward to testify, will lead to the FBI seeking to extradite Andrew for formal questioning and probable charges. The UK has an extradition treaty with the US and Andrew, now a mere commoner like the rest of us, has no royal protection or special status to hide behind.

The British government will have no choice but to acquiesce, and Andrew will find himself in US custody before you can say "Giuffre".

This process will begin next year – and here's one more forecast to finish with: it won't be Prime Minister Starmer's signature on Andrew's extradition papers. The PM's scrawl will read as Streeting, Burnham or Rayner. (My money's on Rayner.) Happy New Year, everyone!

Carole Malone

2025 will be remembered as the year Britain began its descent down the toilet thanks to the most shambolic, blundering, incompetent government in history. Never have such a shower of brainless, clueless, half-witted politicians done so much harm in so little time.

We all knew Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves were going to be bad, but we couldn't have known that they would literally destroy the country whilst simultaneously telling us – and the rest of the world – that they were saving it. Wonder of wonders, David Lammy still has a job in government despite being as thick as mince and, if he's still in position this time next year, he'll have probably given back the Falklands and sold off Scotland and Wales.

Lying to the British public has become an integral part of the way this government does business. It lies to us and then whenever a politician is caught out (I'm talking about you, Rachel Reeves) they just say: "I don't accept that." And we're all supposed to just move on.

A brilliant development this year was the Supreme Court's ruling that the term "woman" refers only to biological females – not blokes who declare themselves as women and then expect to be afforded all the privileges women have fought for.

Thanks to the Supreme Court, women everywhere now have the right to say NO to biological men who invade their private spaces.

And a big cheer to all those biological women who took on institutions like the NHS this year that are in thrall to the trans brigade and are refusing to enforce the Supreme Court ruling. Keep up the fight, girls! Another shout out – this time for the Lionesses who won Euro '25 and showed the blokes how it's done.

The good news is that Reform is likely to form the next government, although God knows what will be left to govern after Labour's finished with us. Not many laughs except when the ridiculous Lib Dem leader, Ed Davey, made a complete t*t of himself (again) and fell into Lake Windermere while he was paddle boarding for yet another photo op (it's all he does these days apart from bitch about Nigel Farage).

I've managed to keep my weight off although it doesn't stop the Twitter trolls (and JJ Anisiobi) screaming that I'm a fat old hag who wears a wig (I don't by the way).

Anyway, while I'd like to sign off for 2025 singing you a few bars of Labour's anthem: "Things can only get better", I can't because with Starmer and his crummy crew still at the helm – we all know they won't. Happy 2026 people. Get your tin hats on!

Leo McKinstry

THROUGHOUT 2025 there was a sense that the old order was fraying. Historic institutions were losing their confidence, age-old traditions their influence. The Royal Family were as dutiful as ever, but they were undermined by the huge scandal that engulfed the Duke of York over his links to the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, a discreditable connection that saw him stripped of most of his titles.

In the spiritual realm, the appointment of former nurse Sarah Mullally as first female Archbishop of Canterbury did nothing to arrest the decline of the established Church.

Campaigners Susan Smith and Marion Calder of For Women Scotland after their historic Supreme Court victory that ruled women are, in fact, women

Nigel Farage with Sarah Pochin, who won Runcorn by-election for Reform

From a welcome victory on women's rights and the continuing rise of Reform, to more trouble ahead for the late Queen's favourite son and a possible new face in No 10, Daily Express columnists look back on 2025 and share their predictions for the coming year

Similarly in the political realm, the two-party system – which has governed Britain for more than a century – was breaking apart as Reform under Nigel Farage stormed to a permanent substantial lead in the opinion polls. Given the size of Labour's landslide in the 2024 General Election, the fall in the government's popularity was remarkable.

The collapse was precipitated by economic mismanagement, broken promises and endless U-turns, all of which fed the perception that neither the Prime Minister nor the Chancellor were up to the job. Both parties were humiliated in the two major by-elections held in 2025, the first in the Commons seat Runcorn (won by Reform); the second in the Welsh assembly seat of Caerphilly (won by Plaid Cymru). I predict that in 2026, Labour's woes will continue, but, contrary to fashionable political wisdom, I think Sir Keir Starmer will survive in his post. Sentimental and ineffectual, Labour have always been hopeless at getting rid of dud leaders. And Kemi Badenoch's dramatically improved performances at Westminster will enable her to stay in place, even if she fails to shift her party's ratings next year. Once the pioneer of parliamentary democracy and the Industrial Revolution, Britain in 2025 no longer seemed to be working, as epitomised by junior doctors' strikes in the NHS, sewage in our water supplies and crippling cyber attacks on businesses like Jaguar Land Rover. New records were set in 2025 for the size of welfare bills and the scale of illegal migration. Yet there were success stories in the sporting arena like the astonishing victory of teenage sensation Luke Littler in the darts championships, the triumph of Rory McIlroy in the US Masters and the wins for the England Women's football team in the European championship and for the Women's Rugby team in the World Cup.

Sadly, despite a brilliant qualification campaign in 2025, I doubt that the England Men's team will lift the World Cup, just as our cricketers could not win the Ashes this winter in Australia.

Motability boss Andrew Miller drove off with a bumper salary and bonus

Mieka Smiles

WELL, what a year! Sadly for the UK, however, it seems to be for all the wrong reasons. As the Express resident Tory councillor, I'm bound to say that, aren't I? But after a quick rifle through my 2025 columns, I reckon I have the evidence firmly in hand.

Exhibit One has to be migration. The fallout from the small boats crisis beggars belief – from locked-up asylum seekers being accidentally freed from jail (and then given a few hundred quid pocket money for their trip home) to eye-poppingly luxe migrant hotel stays… It really is like an episode of The Thick Of It on acid.

Exhibit Two is a topic close to my heart – the slow, painful death of our high streets. Starmer's weak £5billion "Pride in Place" plan will do absolutely nowt to fix the issue as his Chancellor Rachel Reeves continues to squeeze businesses for all they are worth. Next year, I would love to see a clearer plan for our high streets, even if it means Starmer swallowing some humble pie and stealing the Tories' idea to scrap business rates for pubs and businesses in our town centres.

And finally, let me present to you Exhibit Three: the scandalous ongoing waste of taxpayer cash on everything from exorbitant pay packets for town hall fat cats through to the scandal that is the Motability scheme, where a contingent of benefit claimants who are overweight or have ADHD try their luck at getting a BMW on the public purse. CEO Andrew Miller, 59, took home £924,000 this year, around a quarter more than the year before, after being given a £300,000 bonus. Shocking!

But I do want to end on a positive – it is Christmas after all! It's my first year as a columnist at the Express and I want to thank you for reading. I always look forward to hearing from readers who have contacted me about everything from their love of dubious fashions (such as Crocs footwear – yuck) to agreeing that we must uphold standards in our daily lives...and cancel anyone who says "free" instead of "three" and cracks their knuckles in public. So on that note, Merry Christmas, one and all!

JJ Anisiobi

2025 has flown by faster than a Cabinet minister abandoning a promise and, for once, I'm not devastated to see it go. Because buried beneath the chaos, the bad headlines and the endless performative outrage, something miraculous has begun to happen in this country: common sense has finally started making a comeback.

And honestly, it's about time. For the best part of a decade, we've all been forced to pretend that reality was optional, truth was offensive and basic logic was hate speech.

But this year, the pendulum finally swung back from the "be kind" brigade to something resembling actual sanity. One of the biggest signals came from the FA, who quietly – well, as quietly as possible – decided that trans women shouldn't compete against women in sport. It was as if someone had reminded them that biology still exists. And you know what? The world didn't end. Wembley didn't collapse. We didn't have an apocalypse of angry hashtags. In fact, the pronoun police seem to have gone eerily quiet. Those triple-barrelled X bios with "they/them/ze/she/astral/elf" feel like relics from a mad chapter we've collectively woken up from.

But perhaps the clearest sign that we've re-entered the age of reason is the public's rediscovery of the ancient art of holding politicians to account. Real Labour supporters are no longer swooning over Starmer's shiny patriotism.

They're clocking the U-turns and the endless promises that evaporate faster than a budget surplus. Meanwhile, Tory voters are howling with laughter – because, suddenly, Robert Jenrick is furious about crime. Great point, Rob. But weren't you part of the 14-year snooze-fest that allowed it to explode?

If 2025 was the year Britain sobered up, then 2026 could be the year we finally act like adults again. Less ideological cosplay, more grown-up governance.

Less selective outrage theatre, more common sense.

MND snowboarder's paralympics bid

A SNOWBOARDER with motor neurone disease is training in a last-ditch effort to become the first person with the condition to compete in the Winter Paralympics.

Davy Zyw, 38, is hoping to take part in the Milan-Cortina Games in 2026, as despite his progressing condition, he can still comfortably race down snowy terrains at breakneck speed.

He had been a competitive snowboarder, but a knee injury ended that. Davy was diagnosed with MND in 2018, and says the condition encouraged him to go back to his passion.

Now he is racing on the international para snowboard circuit, and training alongside Team GB athletes, in a bid to qualify for the games.

If he succeeds, he will be the first UK Paralympian with MND in any sport, and the first Alpine snowsports athlete with the disease anywhere in the world.

BY **RYAN McDOUGALL**

MND has affected his hands, arms and torso. He also faces severe fatigue, cramping, muscle wastage and loss of dexterity. Yet he has climbed to fourth in the Europa Cup rankings with the help of his twin Tommy.

Davy, from Edinburgh, said: "I can rip down a snowboard course at full speed, but need help putting gloves on. I am focusing on what I can do, rather than on what I can't. On the mountain, there's none of the baggage of MND. That gives me a new life."

Davy Zyw in action and with twin Tommy

Knitting circle of fundraising to save craft

BY **RACHEL KEENAN**

A SHETLAND knitting organisation has raised thousands to help "preserve, promote and protect" their heritage from dying out.

Shetlands Organisation for Knitters launched a Crowdfunder in November after declaring the Scottish island's knitting heritage was facing "several serious challenges".

A goal of £40,000 would mean the community could record more senior knitters sharing their practices and offer training to younger Shetlanders to keep their specific knit style alive.

With two weeks of fundraising to go, the organisation achieved its goal and any further funds raised will give them breathing room as they start sessions in January.

Thrilled

Janette Budge – who teaches Fair Isle knitting, which is a traditional technique using two colours per row to create intricate, geometric patterns – is thrilled support is being given to save the craft.

She said: "It will be really good, because there are gaps. We have the Shetland Textile Museum, which keeps items. But the actual techniques of Fair Isle knitting aren't being catalogued in the same way."

The Crowdfunder organisers say as experienced knitters pass away "their skills and stories are being lost with them". Elizabeth Johnston, a trustee of SOK, has been knitting for almost 70 years and started the craft before she first went to school. She said: "Everything was hand-spun up until about 1900 and then hand-knitted for the next 30 to 40 years before machines started to come in.

Janette Budge teaches the ancient craft

"So we still have that knowledge, and most places in the world don't have that complete handmade knowledge. Professional handmade knowledge, not hobby."

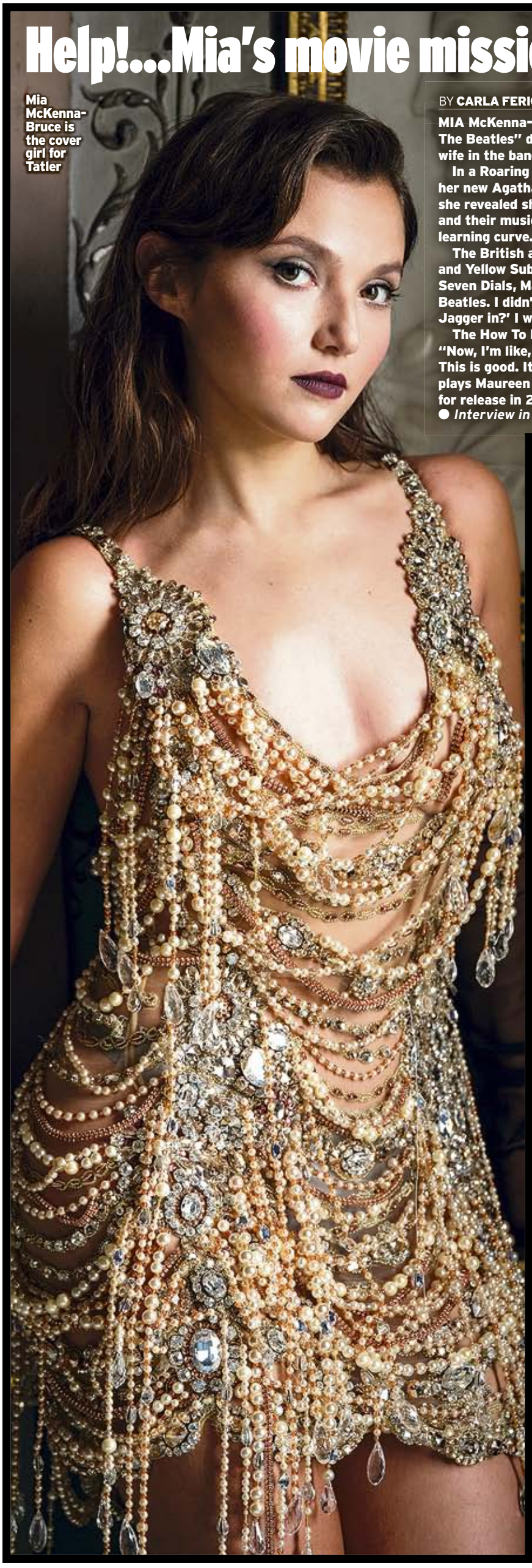
She will be one of the Shetlands knitters who will be teaching youngsters her skills in the new year.

Ms Johnston added: "My children didn't knit much and now my grandchildren don't knit much at all and we need to catch this.

"If my generation goes, there won't be the knowledge to pass down. So we need to fix that now.

"People my age have a lot of work to do to record and teach so that the knowledge is there. You can record everything, but you have to teach it, they have to see it being done."

Help!...Mia's movie mission to learn who The Beatles were



Mia McKenna-Bruce is the cover girl for Tatler

BY **CARLA FERIC**

MIA McKenna-Bruce admits she "didn't know much about The Beatles" despite being cast as Sir Ringo Starr's first wife in the band's biopic films.

In a Roaring Twenties magazine photoshoot ahead of her new Agatha Christie drama Seven Dials for Netflix, she revealed she couldn't name the members of the band and their music "wasn't my jam". But now she is on a big learning curve.

The British actress, 28, said: "We sang Eleanor Rigby and Yellow Submarine at school, but it wasn't my jam. On Seven Dials, Martin Freeman was asking me to name The Beatles. I didn't know. Then he'd ask, 'what band is Mick Jagger in?' I was like, 'I have no idea'."

The How To Have Sex Star also told Tatler magazine: "Now, I'm like, 'Oh my God, The Beatles are underrated'. This is good. It's music I'd listen to on the train." The star plays Maureen Starkey in Sir Sam Mendes' movies, due for release in 2028.

● *Interview in February issue of Tatler, out on January 8.*

Actress channels 1920s style in photo shoot

Spat dominates US-led peace bid

BY **FRANCES MILLAR**

RUSSIA overshadowed diplomatic efforts to end the war in Ukraine as Moscow doubled down on claims that Volodymyr Zelensky's troops had attacked a residence of Vladimir Putin.

European and Canadian leaders held virtual talks yesterday about US-led peace plans.

After the talks Polish prime minister Donald Tusk said "peace is on the horizon" but is "far from a 100% certainty".

German leader Friedrich Merz added: "We are advancing the peace process. Transparency and honesty are needed from everyone – including from Russia."

It was the first European leaders' meeting since US president Donald Trump hosted Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky at his Florida resort on Sunday.

Russia claimed Ukraine had launched 91 long-range drones at a lakeside residence used by Putin in northwestern Russia at the time of the Florida talks.

Ukraine denied the claim and said there was no evidence for it.

Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called the alleged strike a "terrorist attack" aimed at collapsing the peace negotiations, claiming it was not just directed at the Russian president "but also against Trump".

Evidence

He said: "It is aimed at disrupting President Trump's efforts to facilitate a peaceful resolution of the Ukrainian conflict."

Dismissing Ukrainian calls for evidence to back up Russia's claims of an attack, Mr Peskov said: "I don't think there should be any evidence here... if a mass attack drone takes place, which was successfully shot down by our air defence system.

"As for the debris...that's a matter for our military."

Peskov would not say where Putin was at the time of the attack, saying that is "not subject to any public discussion".

President Zelensky called the accusation "another lie", accusing the Kremlin of preparing the ground for Russian strikes on government buildings in Kyiv.

Meanwhile, Russian strikes hit two Black Sea ports in Ukraine yesterday, damaging a civilian ship and facilities in Chornomorsk and Pivdennyi.

Ukraine's deputy prime minister Oleksiy Kuleba said a civilian Panama-flagged ship loaded with grains was damaged, and that oil storage tanks were also hit.

LIFE IN KYIV

JOHN MARONE

Despatch from the frontline

ANYONE in the West rooting for Ukraine in its efforts to fend off Russian aggression was either stewing in indignation or slumped over in mild depression following Donald Trump's latest meeting with Volodymyr Zelensky.

Afterwards, Mr Zelensky seemed to be biting his tongue as Mr Trump waxed euphoric about his great relationship with war criminal Vladimir Putin, whom the US president characterised as magnanimous and earnest in his quest for peace.

For those watching in Ukraine, however, Trump's surreal cynicism is something they have got used to – like blackouts, bombings and high prices.

Oleg, who has hawked old coins and collectibles from a fold-up table in the centre of Kyiv for 38 years, says: "I understand Trump. He is out for himself. He is a businessman like me."

But he has no great hopes for the US-led negotiations. "Peace needs to be worked out with the one who started the fight, and that is Putin," he says. "If he does not want to talk then you have to get together with others and confront him. But I do not see anyone doing this."

As for Mr Zelensky, *inset*, Oleg is looking for a willingness to compromise. He says: "If he does not listen to the will of the people they will remove him from power." However, for the generation represented by 30-year-old political and economic analyst Vladislave Ripko, independence and rule of law are a given, not an aspiration.

Vladislave says Ukraine's future is contingent on a complicated set of changing factors.

He said Mr Zelensky has to take into account countless scenarios, particularly with regard to any compromises, and cannot afford to be rushed. He adds: "Now is not the time for Ukraine to compromise."

Kateryna is a mum with a small child for whom peace is something to be hoped for rather than expected.

After enduring nearly four straight years of war, she sees Ukraine as a pawn rather than a player in any peace settlement.

"It looks like they are using us like a bargaining chip," she says.

Gang convicted after elderly were targeted with solar scams

A HEARTLESS gang who tricked elderly and vulnerable people into making expensive eco-upgrades to their homes have been snared.

The three conmen were convicted after an investigation into fraudulent trading practices among cash-strapped pensioners, including dementia sufferers.

Operation Clementine was led by Kent County Council Trading Standards and supported by National Trading Standards regional investigations. The probe uncovered a scheme of mis-selling unnecessary solar energy products

BY **PAUL JEEVES**

over a decade through firms called Clear Renewables Ltd and Efficient Homes SE Ltd. The companies often used misleading scripts and high-pressure tactics, Maidstone Crown Court heard.

One victim was charged £4,200 for equipment that only cost the firm less than £800.

Jesse Hitchings, 29, of Sutton Valence, was found guilty after a trial for two offences relating to fraudulent trading and a further two offences of money laundering. He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and disqualified as a director for seven years.

Matthew Kyte, 38, of Tonbridge, pleaded guilty to five counts of fraud by false representation and was sentenced to 16 months' jail, suspended for two years. Ian Hitchings, 60, of Maidstone, admitted fraudulent trading and was sentenced to 23 months suspended for two years.

Lord Michael Bichard, chair of National Trading Standards, said: "This kind of behaviour will not be tolerated."

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Slimming World

Jack given gift 'no child should have to ask for'

New eye follows cancer

Mum Jodie supporting her son in hospital

TOYS and computer games might have been top of the Christmas list for many boys but Jack Whyman wanted and got something else – a new eye.

The 10-year-old has battled two types of cancer and had his left eye removed in March.

He bravely took it in his stride, even dressing up as a pirate with an eye patch for Halloween.

Now, doctors have spent three months crafting a made-to-measure prosthetic eye from acrylic.

Jack's mum Jodie, 47, said: "Jack's new eye is beautiful and it has made me emotional to see him with it.

"We have been through so much as a family and this is the perfect Christmas present for my boy to have a new eye and feel like we can try to put the past behind us and focus now on our future.

"I hope it means people won't keep asking questions and bringing up the trauma of what Jack has been through and that he can focus on enjoying life like any other 10-year-old.

"We've been to hell and back but we are determined to be positive."

Jack, of Cheshunt in Hertfordshire, was first diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare type of soft tissue sarcoma, in November 2022 after his eye started to droop.

He underwent chemotherapy and proton beam therapy, which left him looking thin and fatigued, and caused hair loss.

The family was supported through the gruelling treatment by the Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity. It helped him understand what was happening and organised visits from Star Wars characters to bring joy to the hospital's wards.

Jodie recalled: "That Christmas, we made it home on Christmas Eve but we were doling out anti-sickness drugs with the presents.

Amazement

"He had no appetite for chocolate and barely managed his Christmas dinner – just turkey and Yorkshire pudding."

Jack was given the all-clear in May 2023, but devastatingly a routine scan in October 2024 revealed a new cancer.

This time, he had malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumour, a soft tissue sarcoma that develops in the cells that cover nerves.

Jack spent another festive season at GOSH, where staff organised carol singers, visits from Santa and stockings of presents. And he

EXCLUSIVE

BY **HANNA GEISSLER**
Health Editor

Jack Whyman lost his eye to cancer but used his patch for Halloween costume

Jack got his prosthetic eye in time for Christmas because of dedicated doctors

appeared in their Christmas TV advert this year. Jodie said losing his eye was "devastating but we'd do whatever it took to save him".

She added: "In the run-up to Christmas, Jack asked for things most kids his age desire – his first phone so he can keep in touch with new friends – but he also wanted something no child should ever have to ask for. A new eye.

"To our amazement, doctors worked around the clock to sculpt him a new prosthetic eye to look like his old one which came just in time for Christmas." After six two-hour appointments at Guy's Hospital Maxillofacial prosthetics in London, Jack was given a prosthetic he can put in and out himself.

The new eye arrived just in time for Jack to celebrate with his mum, dad Wayne, 49, sister Emily, 17, and brother Tom, 12.

He has a final fitting in January. Jodie added: "Jack is the one getting a new eye but our experience has made us all see clearly.

"It's shown us the importance of support from amazing charities like GOSH Charity and that love, family and strength are what's really needed to make the perfect Christmas."

Liz Tait, director of fundraising at the GOSH Charity, said: "We're really proud to have supported Jack and his family since his cancer diagnoses.

"Jack has been incredibly brave, going through cancer treatment twice, so seeing him get a new eye for Christmas is wonderful. As he now focuses on his future, we will continue to support him and his family.

"We want to encourage as many people as possible to donate to the GOSH appeal so we can support more seriously ill children and families."

Handyman who plundered dying OAP's account is jailed

A HANDYMAN who helped himself to £102,000 from an elderly customer's bank account has been jailed.

Simon Appleby, 40, started out as the woman's cleaner, but after the company he worked for went bankrupt he continued doing odd jobs for her such as painting her garage and changing lightbulbs.

The trusting pensioner let him take payments from her online banking account via her laptop.

One £15,000 transaction was made just an hour before she died

BY **CHRIS RICHES**

in hospital in December 2022. Her bereaved family then contacted police about a number of payments made to Appleby, totalling £102,627 over three years and three months.

West Mercia Police said: "Appleby made 41 payments to himself, of various amounts, claiming some were for materials he brought to help him carry out odd jobs at her house.

"However, he was unable to provide any proof of purchases." Enquiries showed Appleby from Letton, Shrops, visited the woman in hospital shortly before she died. Told she was unconscious, he let himself into her house to carry out the final £15,000 transaction.

Detective Constable Emily Cooke called it "a shameful abuse of trust...deeply dishonest and morally inexcusable".

Appleby admitted fraud by false representation last year and has now been jailed for three years at Shrewsbury Crown Court.

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Trustpilot

Puzzles

NEW YEAR'S

39 Across Who had a Christmas hit with I'm A tiger?

Fill in the grid using the clues – explained below. Once completed, rearrange letters in the shaded boxes to spell out the name of a Christmas carol. Clues are of four kinds; (OBC) from the Oxford Book of Carols, (GKN) General Knowledge, (ANA) anagrams and (HID) hidden words. Pictures: PA

ACROSS

1 **(GKN)** Play first staged at London's Duke of York's Theatre on 27 December 1904 (5,3)
5 **(OBC)** "Earth stood hard as iron,/___" (5,4,1,5)
15 **(GKN)** See 45 Across
16 **(GKN)** Country where Christmas is Jól and households are visited by 13 Yule Lads (7)
17 **(GKN)** French sauce made with onions, white wine, vinegar and meat stock (9)
18 **(GKN)** Small inland province of China whose capital is Hefei (5)
19 **(GKN)** Immature cell in an ovary which may undergo meiotic division to form an ovum (6)
20 **(OBC)** "Thou shalt find the winter's rage/___ thy blood less coldly" (6)
21 **(HID)** Maybe the lebkuchen contents her (5)
23 & 24 **(GKN)** Actor who played Santa Claus in the 2023 film The Heist Before Christmas (pictured) (7,5)

26 **(GKN)** Any dinosaur of the bipedal suborder that included the iguanodon' (10)
29 **(OBC)** "From ___ will I never stray,/But with my wondrous Bridegroom stay" (5)
31 **(ANA)** Ribbon's primarily in different niche, and it's a nuisance (9)
33 **(GKN)** 'Bath of Mary' in a kitchen, also known as a double boiler (4-5)
35 **(OBC)** "Where ___ stands watching/And faith holds wide the door" (7)
37 **(GKN)** Celtic name for the River Clyde,

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN £1,000

Complete the crossword to reveal the hidden words making up the title of a Christmas carol. Put your grey cells to the test this Christmas and solve our bumper crossword to be in with a chance to win £1,000. For your chance to win call **0905 789 3443** (80p per minute plus network rate)*. Or text **DXXMAS** to **88833** (£1.50 per text plus standard network rate)** This competition closes at midnight on Thursday, January 1, 2026.

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£1,000 CROSSWORD

shared with the second-longest river in New Zealand (6)

39 **(GKN)** Scottish singer who had a Christmas Top 10 with I'm A Tiger in 1968 (pictured) (4)

40 **(OBC)** "Then praise the Word of God who came/To dwell within a ___ frame" (5)

42 **(OBC)** "___,/Ris'n with healing in his wings" (5,3,4,2,3,2,6)

44 **(GKN)** Third-largest city of Sweden, noted for its annual Christmas market (5)

45 & 15 **(GKN)** US singer who recorded Shake The Snow Globe for the 2025 film Oh. What. Fun. (4,7)

46 **(OBC)** "And left their flocks a-feeding/In tempest ___ of wind" (6)

47 **(GKN)** Indian rice variety whose name means 'fragrant' or 'aromatic' in Hindi (7)

49 **(GKN)** Poet whose works include 1957's The Christmas That Almost Wasn't (5,4)

51 **(ANA)** Theatre run pro-tree cast ultimately end (9)

55 **(HID)** Fire inside – burning leaves? (5)

57 **(GKN)** Volcano of Africa, whose parkland became a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2003 (5,5)

60 **(HID)** Fold and somewhat crumple a t-shirt (5)

61 **(OBC)** "What ___ by Him we do win,/Who made Himself the price of sin" (7)

65 **(OBC)** "Shepherds, who their night-fold tended,/Hailed alone the new-born ___" (5)

66 **(OBC)** "Give him your heart the first of all,/Free from all -, wrath and gall" (6)

67 & 63 **(GKN)** US singer-songwriter whose latest single is 2025's Gifts For Me (pictured) (6,7)

69 **(GKN)** Tropical fruit of the myrtle family whose varieties include Mexican Cream or Red Malaysian (5)

71 **(GKN)** Chief seaport of Madagascar, also known by the French name Tamatave (9)

72 **(GKN)** Bagpipe music consisting of a melodic theme with variations (7)

73 **(GKN)** Oily yellow antibacterial compound in garlic that gives it its distinctive odour (7)

74 **(OBC)** "Since all he came to ransom / ___" (2,3,2,2,6)

75 **(ANA)** Traveller wandering free as a bird dropping bid (8)

DOWN

1 **(GKN)** Of an animal in heraldry, walking towards the dexter side with the dexter forepaw raised (7)

2 **(GKN)** Second of Charles Dickens' five Christmas books, subtitled A Goblin Story of Some Bells that Rang an Old Year Out and a New Year In (3,6)

3 **(ANA)** Articles put out about missing person not overly optimistic (7)

4 **(ANA)** American maintenance man oily after work? (7)

6 **(GKN)** In grammar, the doer of an action expressed by a verb (5)

7 **(GKN)** 'Reddish' and 'hairy' son of the Biblical patriarch Isaac who founded the Edomites (4)

8 **(GKN)** German word in English use that literally means 'leather trousers' (10)

9 **(GKN)** Tim Allen's successor as Santa Claus in the TV series The Santa Clauses (pictured) (3,4)

10 **(OBC)** "He came on earth for sin to ___,/And Satan to destroy" (5)

11 **(GKN)** Hybrid citrus fruit whose varieties include Orlando, Minneola and Seminole (7)

12 **(OBC)** "Up, my ___, let us pray,/Thank our Maker every day" (9)

13 **(GKN)** See 22 Down

14 **(GKN)** See 41 Down

22 & 13 **(GKN)** Actor whose character works for Arnold Schwarzenegger's Santa Claus in the 2025 film The Man With The Bag (4,8)

25 **(OBC)** "O Flower, whose fragrance tender/With sweetness fills the ___" (3)

27 **(OBC)** "Come, let us

then our – pay/To our good God, as well we may" (7)

28 **(GKN)** Chemical element 117, created in 2010 and known provisionally as ununseptium (10)

29 **(GKN)** Star of the Christmas-set 1960 romantic comedy film The Apartment (4,6)

30 **(GKN)** 1923 George Bernard Shaw play whose titular protagonist is 'Original and Presumptuous' (5,4)

31 **(OBC)** "When his birth-place was a stable/And his softest bed was ___" (3)

32 **(GKN)** Giant wrestler slain by the Greek hero Hercules in the course of his eleventh Labour (7)

33 **(ANA)** Squabble without question bad for seasonal hang-ups? (7)

34 **(GKN)** Hindu religious teacher, especially one concerned with mysticism (9)

36 **(OBC)** "Your ___ voices gently blend/In psalms and songs that have no end" (5)

37 **(GKN)** Familiar name of the former Throop University, founded in Pasadena, California, in 1891 (7)

38 **(GKN)** Omission of sounds or letters from the ends of words, as when 'doctor' becomes 'doc' or 'cup of' becomes 'cuppa' (7)

41 & 14 **(GKN)** Tom Wozniczka's co-star in the festive 2025 romantic comedy Champagne Problems (5,5)

43 **(ANA)** A Wagner composition could annoy computer users (7)

47 **(OBC)** "A ___ was born in Bethlehem;/rejoice for that, Jerusalem!" (3)

48 **(GKN)** Director of It's A Wonderful Life (5,5)

50 **(GKN)** Common name for the one-humped Arabian camel, from the Greek for 'running' (9)

52 **(OBC)** "And in his paradise rejoice/With harp and ___ and happy noise" (4)

53 **(GKN)** Ruta graveolens, known in former times as the herb of grace (3)

54 **(GKN)** German co-discoverer (with Fritz Strassmann) of nuclear fission (4,4)

56 **(GKN)** Person who practises divination by reading the patterns in thrown handfuls of earth (9)

58 **(GKN)** Sport invented by Clara Baer in the 1890s (7)

59 **(OBC)** "By that sword, and that alone,/Shall ___ be overthrown" (7)

61 **(GKN)** Wedge-shaped, as of a plant leaf or several features of the brainstem (7)

62 **(GKN)** Coastal resort of SW Majorca which is home to Illa de sa Porrassa (Black Lizard Island) (7)

63 **(GKN)** See 67 Across

64 **(GKN)** Translucent semiprecious variety of chalcedony named after the Dirillo (formerly Achates) river of Sicily (5)

66 **(GKN)** Throne name of Prince Mutsuhito, emperor of Japan from 1867 to 1912 (5)

68 **(GKN)** Form of lyric poem comprising couplets of a long line followed by a shorter one (5)

70 **(GKN)** Principal river of NE Spain, after which the Iberian Peninsula is named (4)

From empty nester

EXCLUSIVE
By **Emma Elms**

Jane Backhouse with daughters Emily and Megan

When her youngest child left home for university, Jane Backhouse could have downsized and enjoyed her newfound freedom. Instead, she and husband Edward opened their home and hearts to three siblings aged three and under

IT WAS an ordinary afternoon in February 2024 when Jane Backhouse took a phone call that changed her entire family's life. The woman on the phone told her, "We have a two-year-old and a three-year-old... and there's also a four-month-old baby. They're siblings. We'd like to keep them together if possible."

Jane, then aged 53, had one immediate thought: "Oh my goodness! Three?! A baby?! At my age?"

After Emily, the youngest of Jane's three children, was born, she took voluntary redundancy from her job managing a hotel and loved being a full-time mum. When she eventually went back to work, it was in a specialist school as an engagement tutor. The children would come to her for therapy or mindfulness sessions. Some of them were in the care system, and she found helping them immensely rewarding.

By the time Emily was preparing to leave for university, Jane would catch herself staring at her daughter across the kitchen table thinking, "Next year the house is going to feel so quiet – too quiet."

She could feel the empty nest looming. Jane and husband Edward started discussing downsizing, but one evening she turned to him and said, "What about fostering?"

In fact, her idea is becoming more common, as mid-lifers like Jane are being called on to help with the UK's fostering crisis. Over 12,500 more foster carers are urgently needed, according to figures from the National Fostering Group. The current lack of carers means siblings are more likely to be split up or placed far away from their home towns.

Jane's suggestion wasn't completely out of the blue. A close friend of hers had fostered and inspired her when talking about her own positive experience. But that night, something stirred in her.

The more Edward and Jane talked about it, the more right it felt. They already had two empty bedrooms with their eldest two George, then 26, and Megan, then 28, gone – soon to be three once their youngest left for university that September – so they clearly had space for more children.

In fact, over 67% of foster carers with the NFG are over 50, and the most popular age group is 55-64. The wisdom, experience and financial security that comes with being 50-plus can be a real advantage. "We see many people in their 50s and beyond come forward to foster once their own children have grown up," says Pamela Larsen, director of quality safeguarding and social work at the NFG. "It's a common time to start the journey as people often find they have space in their homes and hearts, as well as the life experience and patience that children need."

FIRST, Jane needed to discuss it with her own children since it would affect all their lives. "My youngest daughter Emily was thrilled," she says. "She told us she didn't want any other teenagers moving in, since she was only 17 herself when we started the application process, but she loved the idea of having little children around before she left for university. My son George asked, 'Are you absolutely sure, Mum?' And I knew that I was."

Jane was realistic about the challenges they may face, but she knew they would receive rigorous training and have support on tap from the fostering agency.

So, what makes a good foster carer? "Being nurturing, patient and able to give children the stability and commitment they need are the most important things," she says. "It's about being there for a child through the ups and downs and helping them feel part of a family."

It took a year of in-depth interviews, assessments and training before they were finally approved as foster carers. They registered with the NFG, which delved into every aspect of their lives, including their marriage.

Then finally, the day arrived when the phone rang. The NFG often sees an increase in people fostering in the new year period, believing this is due to people reflecting on their lives, thinking about new opportunities, or acting on something they've always wanted to do. In fact, this January, the NFG heard from 35% more people than in the previous month of December 2024. The agency told Jane an emergency court order was going through, so there was a strong chance these three young children would need to come to her home the next evening.

"The idea of siblings being separated broke my heart," remembers Jane. "I knew there was no way I could say no."

Still, they needed to talk it over as a whole family before Jane could confirm with the agency. Thankfully, over a hastily organised Zoom call, their children all agreed with her and promised to be part of their support system too. (They'd all already been vetted and had checks.)

Jane dashed out to buy nappies, pyjamas, a couple of outfits and food for the children. Then the next evening at 9pm, three tiny curly-haired children appeared in their hallway. The baby was fast asleep in the arms of a social worker, but the eldest two looked utterly lost in this big, new house with total strangers. They each clutched a small bag with a few belongings and didn't say a word as the social workers introduced them.

"Edward gave out bananas and biscuits as a distraction, then pretended to be a dinosaur to make the children smile," remembers Jane. "He's always had a lovely sense of fun! Then we showed the three of them their bedrooms, complete with princess and Thomas the Tank Engine duvet covers. Once the social workers had left, I tucked them into bed, telling them, 'We're so happy to have you here'. I wanted them to feel loved and secure but Luke* couldn't sleep."

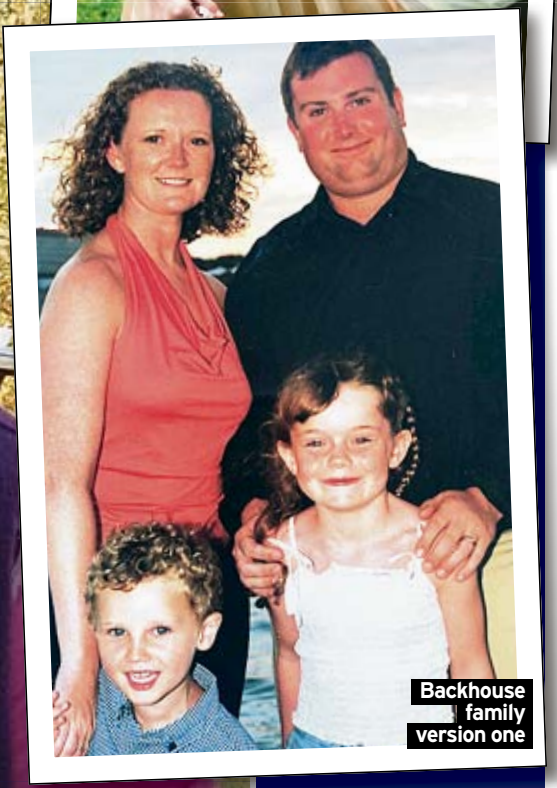
AT 3.45am, Jane ended up watching Mickey Mouse with him on the sofa downstairs until they both eventually dropped off. The next morning, over a hearty breakfast of cereal and pancakes, Jane discovered that all three children had a bigger appetite than her.

The agency had told them that although the birth parents were unable to look after them at the moment, there was always a chance they could apply to the court one day

to foster carer

Jane and husband Edward abandoned plans to downsize their home to foster siblings

Megan and brother George



Backhouse family version one

Having a second family has kept the couple young

to try to get their children back. Jane and Edward's job, in the meantime, was to create a stable and loving family home. In the UK, there is no time limit on how long a child can be fostered for – it can last for a few days, several months or many years, right into adulthood, including a continuing care arrangement beyond 18.

Fostering does not automatically lead to adoption and foster carers are not legally required to adopt a child.

"The first few weeks were a challenge," admits Jane. "The children had no routine, so the eldest two couldn't get to sleep. The first time I took them to the park by myself, Luke shot off in one direction and Georgina* the other. I was shouting their names, but no one was listening, so I just had to chase after the fastest runner – Luke! There were unexpected challenges too, like the fact Luke still wasn't potty trained at three, which took a lot of time and work to resolve."

Jane and Edward had (and still have) to keep a detailed daily log of everything the children do, even when they gave them Calpol. One day, when they turn 18, they'll each receive that log as a record of their life, helping them make sense of their past.

Slowly, Jane managed to introduce routine, and the children thrived on having meals together at regular times, afternoon naps and early bedtimes.

After a few broken nights, when the children would wake up, they soon settled. Jane says: "One night, Georgina woke up crying so I sat with her, stroking her hair until she finally relaxed enough to go back to sleep. Trust is the most precious gift.

"Other moments of pure joy swiftly followed – like when Josh* took his first steps in the living room and when Luke learned to ride a bike."

Now, two years on, the youngest two are at nursery and Luke is happily settled in school. All three of them do gymnastics classes; they all have amazing co-ordination.

The children are helping Jane, too. Her personal trainer laughed recently that she has "amazing upper body strength" from lifting toddlers all day. Before the children came along, Edward and Jane had talked about their retirement, imagining themselves going on cycling holidays, and Edward wanting to go on fishing trips to Scotland. They'll still do all those things, but now they'll plan to take the children along too. Edward, being an outdoorsy countryman, loves taking them for woodland walks and can't wait to buy Luke his first fishing rod when he turns five.

THEY don't know what the future will hold – the birth parents could still apply to court for their return. It would break Jane's heart to lose the children. "We are their family now, but I will support whatever the court thinks is best for them," she says.

When a child comes into care, the court has up to 26 weeks to decide what happens next. This may include the child returning home, remaining in foster care, moving to a Special Guardianship arrangement, or the local authority seeking adoption. Although a birth parent may be able to make an application in some circumstances, it's very unlikely that a court would disrupt a long-term, stable foster placement unless there were exceptional circumstances and it was clearly in the best interests of the child.

In the meantime, the relationship the Backhouses have with the birth parents is and always has been very positive, with weekly meet-ups outdoors.

Jane's own older children have become almost bonus parents too. Josh, Luke and Georgina have filled their home with fun, energy, and joy. Jane says: "I never thought I could love other children as much as I love my own, but I absolutely do."

● *Some names (*) have been changed to protect the children's identity.*
For more information, visit the National Fostering Group at nfa.co.uk, the Fostering Network thefosteringnetwork.org.uk or gov.uk/becoming-foster-parent. Call Fosterline for free advice on 0800 040 7675.

30-SECOND CHALLENGE

JUST follow the instructions from left to right, starting with the number given to reach an answer at the end of the row. Set your own 30-second challenge: for the very young or arithmetically rusty, you have 30 seconds for the BEGINNER task. For a greater challenge, try BEGINNER and INTERMEDIATE in 30 seconds. True mental gymnasts should try INTERMEDIATE and ADVANCED in 30 seconds together.

Today's answers can be found in the puzzles pullout

										YOUR ANSWERS
Beginner	5	SQUARE IT	-17	3/4 OF THIS	+25	x3	-6	÷3	+27	
Intermediate	225	TAKE THE SQUARE ROOT	+36	2/3 OF THIS	+28	x5	-30	40% OF THIS	+129	
Advanced	56	x13	-38	30% OF THIS	+195	÷6	+149	TAKE THE CUBE ROOT	x18	

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30
EUROMILLIONS
11 26 29 34 44 1 10

THUNDERBALL
6 7 18 28 35 14

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29
SET FOR LIFE
8 13 15 25 39 6

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27
LOTTERY
20 36 40 43 51 55 21

THUNDERBALL
3 21 24 26 33 2

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30
1 23 25 36 49 8

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29
12 15 22 28 49 34

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PHONE POLL RESULTS

We asked in our poll on Monday:
Will care home residents be put at risk if full inspections are delayed?

YES: 96%
NO: 4%

SUDOKU

Fill in all the squares so that each row, each column, and each 3x3 square contain all the digits from 1 to 9

9			5		2	3		
		3		7			1	5
1					6		2	9
	7				5		9	8
		9		4	1		6	
8	2		6			5		
6	1		7					2
7		4		6	9	8		
			1		4			3

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MORE PUZZLES – PULLOUT

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

4	3	7	2	9	1	5	6	8
9	5	2	6	3	8	1	7	4
1	6	8	5	7	4	2	3	9
7	2	9	3	8	6	4	5	1
8	4	6	1	5	7	9	2	3
3	1	5	4	2	9	7	8	6
5	7	1	9	6	3	8	4	2
6	8	4	7	1	2	3	9	5
2	9	3	8	4	5	6	1	7

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Maureen hard at work in her button shop

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Maureen said: "I love making the buttons. If I didn't love it then I wouldn't do it."

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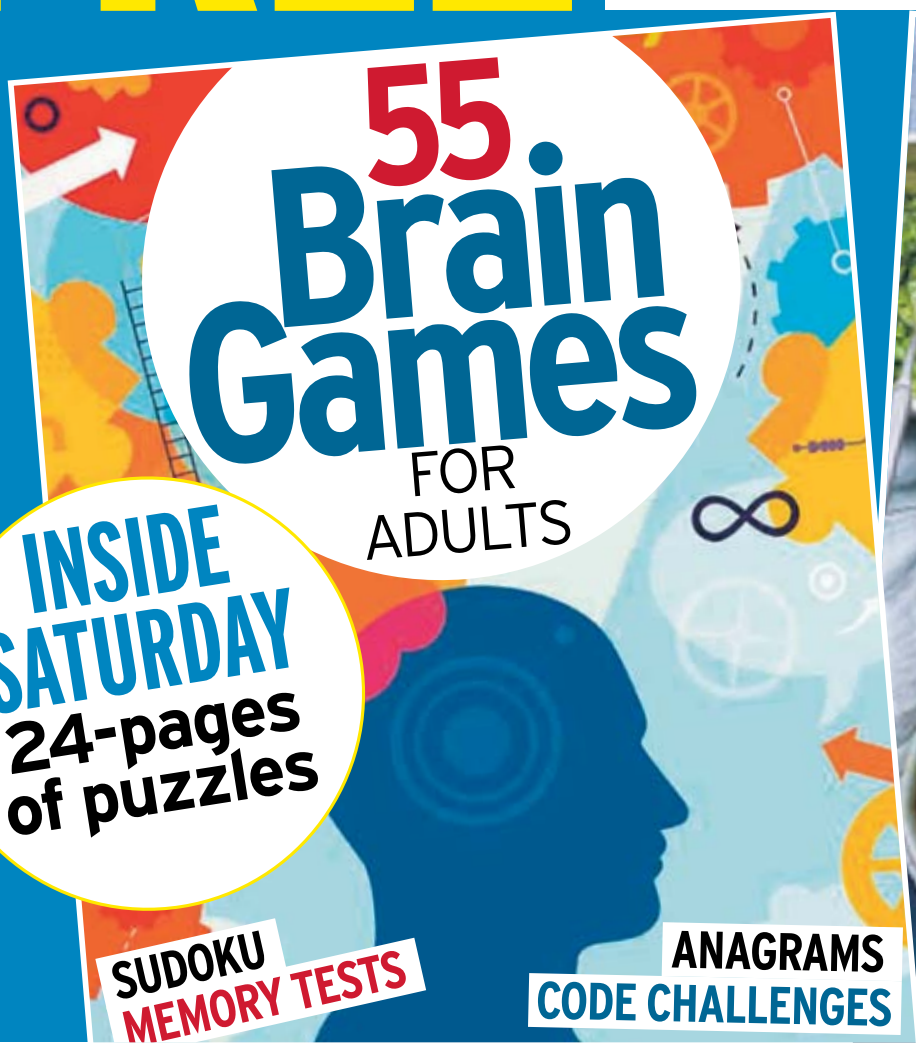

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Tangerine Beach Hotel, Kalutara

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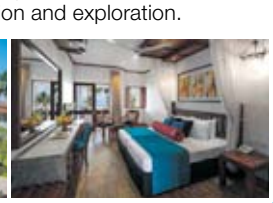

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SUNDAY TRAVEL, GARDENING & REVIEWS

YOUR MONEY

Edited by **HARVEY JONES**

STAYING PUT
2025 a year to forget for housing market

Market set to steady after dismal 2025

Buyers and sellers have been put off by a flatlining housing market this year – but hopes are rising among industry experts that things can only get better, with falling interest rates and a reality check

MONEY

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MOVING SWIFTLY ON
Agents are hoping for a happier New Year after uncertainty

This year was another difficult one for the property market as house prices continued to stagnate, and experts are only slightly more optimistic about the year ahead. Although 1.2 million homes were sold last year, the highest figure recorded since 2022, prices only rose a modest 1.1% to £270,300, an increase of just £3,050, according to Zoopla.

Prices have largely flattened since Liz Truss unleashed her ill-fated mini Budget in September 2022, which sent mortgage rates soaring and froze activity almost overnight.

Two tax-hiking Labour Budgets have further dampened demand, worsened by sell-offs as buy-to-let landlords and second homeowners sold up to escape the squeeze.

The Bank of England cut base rates on December 18 to 3.75%, and there is talk of mortgage rates dipping below 3% in the weeks ahead. With two more rate cuts likely this year, confidence should gradually return. The housing market is now poised to shift "from subdued to steady", said Nick Leeming, chairman at estate agent Jackson-Stops. "We expect prices to rise between 2% and 3% in 2026 as demand gradually improves but supply also increases," he added.

Someone arranging a two-year fixed-rate mortgage on a £273,000 property now pays £1,255 a month, down from £1,323 last Christmas, according to analysis from mortgage broker Alexander Hall.

Its managing director Richard Merrett said that £68 monthly saving adds up to £1,632 over two years: "Market conditions this Christmas are considerably more favourable than they were a year ago."

Last year also saw a steady recovery in the number of first-time buyers, who accounted for almost four in 10 purchases.

Yet getting on the property ladder remains difficult, said property expert Joseph Lane at Mortgage Lane, with the average age of a first-time buyer climbing to 33 and deposits averaging £61,000.

"Rising house prices, slower and more uneven career progression and extended time in the rental market delay ownership." Many buyers remain cautious, he added.

"Economic uncertainty, interest-rate volatility and cost-of-living pressures have encouraged buyers to prioritise long-term affordability over rushing onto the ladder," Lane said.

A more solid housing market may encourage some older owners to downsize to a smaller property, although they should examine all the costs involved first. It may also encourage others to unlock capital in their home through equity release.

The housing market is still very early in its recovery, and with the economy shrinking at the end of the year, 2026 is unlikely to be a bumper one.

The good news is that this could give younger buyers more time to build a deposit and finally get on the ladder.

Prices have largely flattened since Liz Truss unleashed her ill-fated mini Budget in September 2022

DISASTER *Liz Truss*

How to relieve worst of Reeves' Budget squeeze

BREAKING THE BANK
Britain feels pinch of Chancellor's policies

Edited by **HARVEY JONES**

November's Budget remains a painful memory but the real agony is still to come, with a string of tax hikes hitting Britons in April. Thanks to a combination of the ongoing freeze on income tax thresholds, and measures introduced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves last month, taxpayers will find themselves paying extra in five different ways.

They may even hand over more to HMRC even if they aren't earning a penny extra, said Sarah Coles, head of personal finance at Hargreaves Lansdown: "The good news is that you can fight these tax hikes, and getting started early will give you the best possible chance of avoiding some of the pain that 2026 holds in store."

1. Income tax freeze. The biggest stealth raid is on pay, Coles said. Income tax and National Insurance thresholds will be frozen every year until 2031, pushing more people into higher tax bands every year as pay and the state pension rises.

Being pushed into a higher tax band can also shrink your personal savings allowance, the interest you can earn each year before paying tax, and trigger higher rates on dividend tax and capital gains tax (CGT).

2. Dividend tax. Investors are also in the firing line, Coles said. In April, dividend tax will rise by 2 percentage points, from 8.75% to 10.75% for basic rate taxpayers, and from 33.75% to 35.75% for higher rate taxpayers. Coles said: "This follows sharp cuts to the dividend allowance, now just £500 a year, making it a punishing time to hold investments outside an ISA or pension."

3. Inheritance tax. The inheritance tax (IHT) nil rate band will remain frozen at £325,000, with the main residence band stuck at £175,000 until 2031.

House and stock market price growth means more families will be caught. Incredibly, the £3,000 annual gift allowance hasn't increased since 1981.

4. Council tax. Bills will rise again in April, with struggling authorities expected to push through the maximum 5% increase. Visit government portal gov.uk to check with your council if you're eligible for a discount.

5. Alcohol, cigarettes and petrol. Drinkers, smokers and drivers face a raft of new taxes, Coles said. Alcohol duty will rise with inflation from February. The 5p fuel duty cut will start to unwind from August 2026. A new vaping tax of £2.20 per 10ml lands in October, alongside a one-off tobacco duty rise, followed by the usual increase in November.

Coles urged taxpayers to fight back, using their tax-free ISA allowance for making contributions to a pension, via workplace salary sacrifice schemes if one is available.

Couples should also think carefully about how assets are shared: "Transferring income-producing assets between spouses can cut tax, and the marriage allowance lets a non-taxpayer pass £1,260 of their personal allowance to a basic rate partner."

Tax bills may be rising, but planning ahead can still soften the blow.

RELENTLESS
Rachel Reeves

The annual January 31 deadline for filing a self-assessment tax return is now exactly one month away, and there's no time to lose. More pensioners may have to file this year, perhaps for the first time, with tax thresholds frozen but the state pension rising under the triple lock.

Miss the deadline and HMRC will slap late filers with an automatic £100 penalty, even if no tax is owed, with further fines and interest if you leave it longer.

Elsa Littlewood, tax partner at accountants BDO, said: "Account for all your income and capital gains, and remember to claim all tax relief due."

If you pay into a personal pension, you are entitled to relief at your marginal rate, and higher and additional rate taxpayers must claim the extra through their tax return. Consider using contributions to reduce exposure to the High Income Child Benefit Charge if your income is between £60,000 and £80,000.

Charitable donations can also reduce tax bills. Gift Aid boosts donations and allows higher and additional rate taxpayers to claim the difference between their top rate and the basic 20%.

"You can claim relief for any charitable donations made during the 2024/25 tax year as well as elect to carry back any made in this tax year up to the date you file your return," Littlewood said.

Declare all rental income from a buy-to-let or holiday home, profits from property sales and foreign income, including overseas pensions and trusts. Side-hustle earnings above £1,000 must also be reported. Interest outside ISAs, including joint bank accounts, and any capital gains on sales of cryptocurrency such as Bitcoin must also be included.

HMRC is targeting historic undeclared gains. Any crypto losses must be declared to HMRC in order to be carried forward and available to offset future gains.

THERE'S NO ESCAPE
Late filers will be hit with a £100 penalty

Put house in order for January 31 deadline

Four big sensitive cash conversations to have with family

The seasonal break is often a time for family, which makes it the perfect opportunity to tackle money matters usually left unspoken. Finance can be a taboo subject in some families, yet frank discussions now can prevent confusion and disputes further down the line.

Andrea Tarasheva, wealth planner at RBC Wealth Management, said grandparents, parents and grandchildren can be nervous about raising the topic in case it appears intrusive or insensitive: "But tackling delicate discussions now can help your loved ones deal with issues and avoid confusion or even resentment over critical family issues."

TEACH THEM A LESSON

It's worth having a simple finance lesson with children and grandchildren. Christmas provides a chance to explain basics like paying bills on time, how pensions work, or the importance of disciplined spending and investment. "Discussing where the money came from can help family understand that it didn't just happen by chance so that they learn to build wealth themselves and manage any inheritance responsibly," Tarasheva said.

CHAT ABOUT INHERITANCES

Being transparent about who is to inherit what can prevent painful family rows later. "Lifetime gifting can be both tax efficient and personally rewarding as you might get to see the recipient go to university or buy their first property. Grandparents could contribute to a Junior ISA or a pension," Tarasheva said.

MONEY TALKS
Deal with big issues

DISCUSS AND UPDATE WILLS

Take time to ensure there's an up-to-date will in place, especially after major life events such as marriage, divorce, births or deaths. Without a will, assets may be distributed according to the law rather than your wishes.

CONSIDER CAPACITY

Families should consider who is best placed to make financial and health decisions if someone loses mental capacity. Setting up a Lasting Power of Attorney ensures trusted individuals can manage affairs and provide care, Tarasheva said. It may not be the easiest thing to do, but it should put your family on a firmer footing for a more prosperous future.

ENTERPRISE

Edited by **MAISHA FROST**

Exciting vision for winter sports fans

FAMILY TEAM
Anna and Ben

It's making magic on the mountains with spectacular eyewear designs, but how does new winter sports brand Skoggl push the boundaries and where will it go next? Launched in 2024 after eight years of development, the small family-run business stands out as a rarity for being British in a sector dominated by international brands and for its innovation, weaving together performance and streetwear statement style.

With a choice of five eye-catching bold and playful patterns, including favourite the snow crystal, these are printed directly on to the googles' lenses without compromising the skier's or snowboarder's vision.

The company's online "create your own" builder lets customers personalise, mix, match and refresh every aspect with different frame colours. Easy swap magnetic lenses come in Sunny Skies and tinted All-Weather options with UV 400 light protection and durability down to -30C while interchangeable helmet-compatible straps ensure further safety and comfort.

Frustrated by the lack of individuality in ski eyewear, entrepreneur Ben Jayson saw how fashion and function were beginning to merge for activity-loving younger generations.

"All googles looked the same, we wanted to find something that matched the energy of style-conscious riders," he explains.

After a long spell prototyping new shapes and materials and investing £30,000 in the concept he was joined by his sister and film industry professional Anna Mimi. A manufacturing partner in China sources and prints the lenses employing a polycarbonate cellulose printing process with patent protection expected for the trade-marked product by 2028.

Components are then dispatched to the Jaysons' home in Penrith in Cumbria for assembly with the family's help in their barn, which also acts as a temporary warehouse.

"Our production structure and management are very efficient so we can keep our goggles competitively priced at £75 each," declares Anna Mimi.

Product sales are direct-to-consumer and following some smart social media marketing go to customers in Australia, Europe and the US as well as the UK.

Now aiming for a £544,000 turnover in its second year, Skoggl is in the midst of a £103,000 pre-seed growth raise that is tax-relief SEIS investor approved.

Success has inspired the Jaysons to explore new applications.

Parents' requests for a children's range will be met next year and another for the off-road motocross crowd who favour pirate-style skull and crossbones patterns.

Further funding backing from a mentor investor with sales experience would help Skoggl with more export pushes in Canada and Europe.

And the next plan is to develop other sports and branded apparel for year-round relevance.

After taking the plunge with a radical concept, the Jaysons are having the ride of their lives and now winter is here they're poised for a peak performance.

● *skoggl.com*

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Bold patterns

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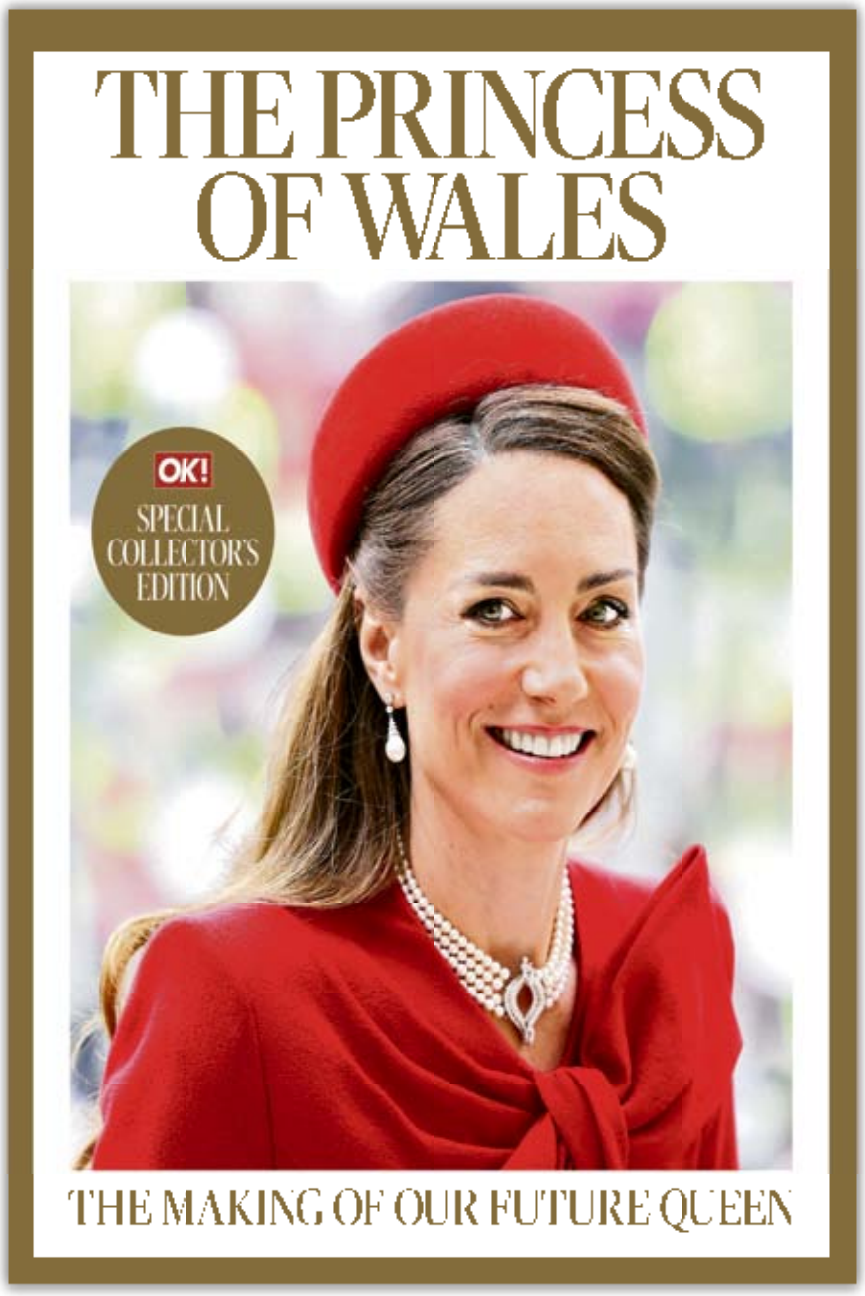

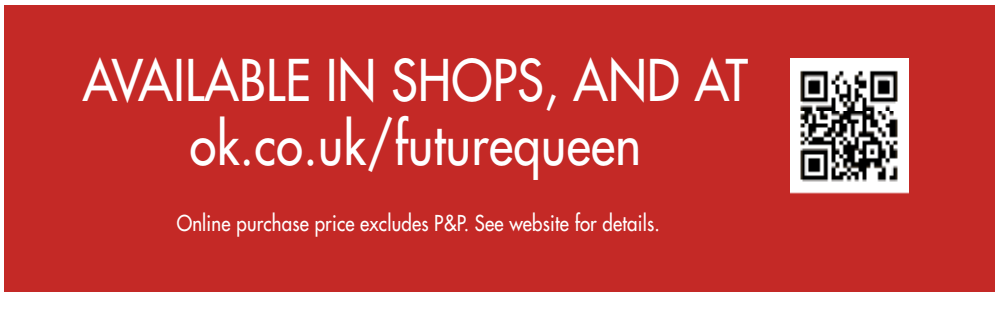

Best savings, mortgages and personal finance deals

Source: Moneyfactscompare.co.uk

Rates correct at 8:00am: 16th December 2025

EASY ACCESS

Provider	Account	Term or Notice	Min	AER	Interest Paid
cahoot	Sunny Day Saver (5)	None	£1	5.00%	Yearly
Chase	Chase Saver Boosted	None	£1	4.50% **A**	Monthly
Sidekick	Sidekick Multi Shield	None	£10,000	4.48% **A**	Monthly
cahoot	Simple Saver (13)	None	£1	4.40%	Yearly

SHORT TERM FIXED RATES

Provider	Account	Term or Notice	Min	AER	Interest Paid
Kent Reliance	Fixed Rate Bond - 17	1 Yr Bnd	£1,000	4.51% **F**	Yearly
LHV Bank	Fixed Rate Bond	1 Yr Bnd	£1,000	4.46% **F**	On maturity
Union Bank of India (UK) Ltd	Fixed Rate Deposit	1 Yr Bnd	£1,000	4.45% **F**	On maturity
Union Bank of India (UK) Ltd	Union Premier Bond	1 Yr Bnd	£5,000	4.45% **F**	On maturity

LONG TERM FIXED RATES

Provider	Account	Term or Notice	Min	AER	Interest Paid
Chetwood Bank	Fixed Rate Savings	5 Yr Bnd	£1,000	4.30% **F**	Yearly
JN Bank	Fixed Term Savings	5 Yr Bnd	£100	4.26% **F**	Yearly
UBL UK	Fixed Term Deposit	4 Yr Bnd	£2,000	4.26% **F**	Yearly
UBL UK	Fixed Term Deposit	5 Yr Bnd	£2,000	4.26% **F**	Yearly

NOTICE ACCOUNTS

Provider	Account	Term or Notice	Min	AER	Interest Paid
Earl Shilton BS	180 Day Notice Online	180 Day	£5,000	4.50%	Yearly
OakNorth Bank	95 Day Tracker - 15	95 Day	£1	4.47%	Monthly
GB Bank	120 Day Notice 3	120 Day	£1,000	4.33%	Yearly
Earl Shilton BS	120 Day Notice Online	120 Day	£5,000	4.30%	Yearly

VARIABLE ISAs

Provider	Account	Term or Notice	Min	AER	Interest Paid
Plum	Plum Cash ISA	None	£1	4.28% **A**	Monthly
Atom Bank	Easy Access Cash ISA	None	£1	4.25%	Monthly
Vanquis Bank	Triple Access Cash ISA (3)	None	£1,000	4.25%	Yearly
Principality BS	Online 5 Access ISA (5)	None	£1	4.20% **A**	Yearly

FIRST TIME BUYERS

Provider	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Redemption Charge
Nationwide BS	4.68%	for 2 years	95%	Nil	1st 2 yrs
HSBC	4.84%	to 28.2.28	95%	Nil	To 28.2.28
Virgin Money	4.72%	to 1.4.31	95%	Nil	To 1.4.31
HSBC	4.77%	to 28.2.31	95%	Nil	To 28.2.31

SHORT TERM FIXED RATES

Provider	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Redemption Charge
Santander	3.55%	to 2.4.28	60%	£999	To 2.4.28
Nationwide BS	4.23%	for 2 years	90%	Nil	1st 2 yrs
Santander	3.69%	to 2.4.29	75%	£999	To 2.4.29
TSB	4.49%	to 28.2.29	90%	Nil	To 28.2.29

LONG TERM FIXED RATES

Provider	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Redemption Charge
Santander	3.76%	to 2.4.31	60%	£999	To 2.4.31
Nationwide BS	3.83%	for 5 years	75%	£999	1st 5 yrs
NatWest	4.20%	to 31.3.31	90%	£995	To 31.3.31
Nationwide BS	4.64%	for 10 years	80%	£999	1st 10 yrs

DISCOUNTED VARIABLE RATES

Provider	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Redemption Charge
Furness BS	4.14%	for 2 years	80%	£999	1st 2 yrs
Furness BS	4.54%	for 2 years	90%	£999	1st 2 yrs
Newbury BS	4.04%	for 3 years	75%	£850	1st 3 yrs
Earl Shilton BS	5.79%	for 5 years	90%	£724	1st 5 yrs

REMORTGAGES

Provider	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Redemption Charge
first direct	3.79%**F**	for 2 years	60%	£490	1st 2 yrs
first direct	4.14%**F**	for 2 years	80%	£490	1st 2 yrs
Santander	3.85%**F**	to 2.4.31	75%	£999	To 2.4.31
Nationwide BS	4.05%**F**	for 5 years	85%	£999	1st 5 yrs

BALANCE TRANSFER CREDIT CARDS

Provider	Product Name	0% Period	Fee	APR
HSBC	Balance Transfer CC V	35 mths	3.19%	24.9%
Barclaycard	Platinum Balance Transfer V	35 mths	3.45%	24.9%
TSB	Plat Balance Transfer MC	35 mths	3.49%	24.9%
Virgin Money	Balance Transfer CC MC	34 mths	2.95%	24.9%

PURCHASE CREDIT CARDS

Provider	Product Name	0% Period	APR
M&S Bank	Purchase Plus Offer MC	25 mths	24.9%
TSB	Platinum Purchase Card MC	25 mths	24.9%
Barclaycard	Plat 21 Mth BT 24 Mth Pur V	24 mths	24.9%
Lloyds Bank	Plat 0% Purch & BT CC Visa	23 mths	24.9%

PERSONAL LOANS - BASED ON £10,000 OVER 5 YEARS

Provider	APR	Monthly Repayment	Total Amount Repayable
M&S Bank	5.8%	£191.71	£11,502.60
TSB	5.9%	£192.15	£11,529.00
Santander	5.9%	£192.15	£11,529.00
Tesco Bank	6.2%	£193.47	£11,608.20

CURRENT ACCOUNTS WITH CREDIT INTEREST OR REWARD

Provider	Account	AER or Amount Paid
TSB	Spend & Save Plus	£5 pm
Nationwide BS	FlexDirect	5.00% **A**
LHV Bank	LHV Current Account	4.00%
Kroo Bank Ltd	Current Account	2.90%

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A = Introductory rate for a limited period. **D** = Discounted variable rate. **F** = Fixed rate. **V** = Variable rate.

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EXPRESS UK PROPERTY ON THE HOME FRONT

Edited by **DEBORAH STONE**

Moving on to brighter times

HOPE *How 2026 is shaping up for buyers*

With another year over and a new one about to begin, to paraphrase John Lennon, the property industry is breathing a collective sigh of relief at the end of a rocky 2025 and talking up the possibility of a better 2026. The much-anticipated reduction of interest rates in December has already led to improved mortgage deals in the run-up to Christmas and insiders hope further expected rate reductions should help get sales moving again.

An end-of-year report by Mojo Mortgages reveals that 95.49% of its customers opted for fixed rate rather than tracker rate mortgages in 2025, with just over half choosing two-year deals and just over a third taking a five-year option. The number taking three or one-year fixed rates was negligible.

During the year, rates dropped from 4.8% in January for two-year deals to 4.1% in December and the company's data shows that remortgagers are now prepared to shop around and switch to a new lender rather than just signing up to a new product from the same provider.

"This suggests the small, downward, movement in rates has created enough competition among lenders to encourage borrowers to actively hunt for the best deal," says John Fraser-Tucker, its head of mortgages. "We fully expect this competitive environment to intensify as we move into 2026."

The long run-up to November's Autumn Budget also affected property sales, particularly family-sized houses, which is partly why first-time buyers snapping up smaller homes became the driving force behind property sales. This was boosted by the Government's refusal to extend First Time Buyer stamp duty relief in England and Northern Ireland beyond March 31, leading to a flurry of activity at the start of the year.

Small downward movement in rates has created competition among lenders

But next summer marks this government's midway point, which is expected to be good news for those in need of affordable housing as Labour starts delivering policies aimed at winning back support for the next general election.

Simon Cox, managing director of Hertfordshire-based land agency Walter Cooper, predicts sustained demand for building land as the Government pushes ahead with unlocking the planning system to meet it 1.5 million new homes target.

"The real question will be turning these policy signals into action and unlocking planning consents in local planning offices," he says. "There will also be significant growth in the affordable housing sector following major new funding announcements towards the end of this year."

Katie Rogers, chief financial officer at low-carbon housebuilder Greencore Homes, agrees: "Homes England is introducing new funding for affordable housing, which presents a strong opportunity for housing association partners and could help many more people into home ownership."

And Omar Al-Hasso, CEO of SimplyPhi – a proptech company that works with housing associations and local authorities – confirms that the Government's £39billion allocation to the Social and Affordable Homes Programme should begin to show signs of progress next year.

After all, as the Labour Party once famously proclaimed: things can only get better.

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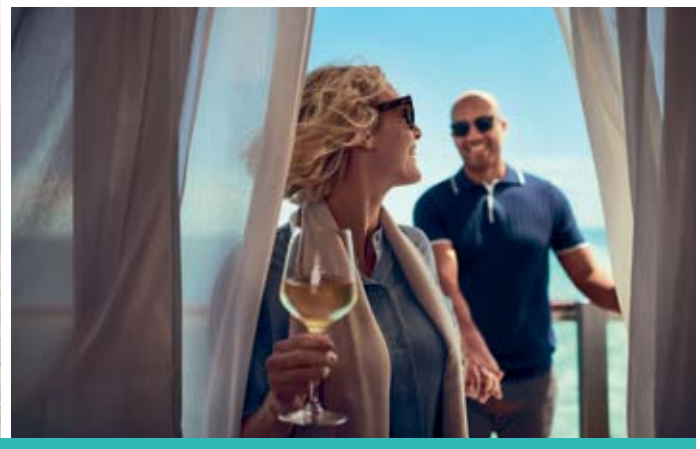

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TODAY'S TV ONES TO WATCH

by **MIKE WARD** *TV critic*

CELEBRITY MASTERMIND, BBC2, 7.30PM

THIS is comedian Josh Jones, one of tonight's contestants. I'm telling you this in case you thought it was Lady Jane Grey, who came to the throne in July 1553 and reigned for just nine days.

Perhaps surprisingly, Josh himself has remarked on the resemblance. Of course, he might just be joking (comedians sometimes do that) but he obviously feels a connection on some level because...well, guess who he's picked as his specialist subject?

Jane, by the way, lost her head in 1554, so any genuine resemblance was short lived. And no, Josh, don't even think about it. A gag can go too far, you know.

PRETTY WOMAN, ITV1, 9PM

IF you know this film like the back of your hand, it's strange to think how differently it could have turned out.

Richard Gere's role as businessman Edward had been turned down by, among others, Al Pacino and Sylvester Stallone. Julia Roberts landed the role of sex worker Vivian only after the likes of Meg Ryan and Michelle Pfeiffer had said no. And the title? At first, it was going to be called, rather weirdly, 3,000, and have a much darker storyline.

There is, however, no truth in the claim that it was originally going to be set on an oil rig. I know that for sure, because I just made it up.

Pick of the day

JOOLS' ANNUAL HOOTENANNY, BBC2, 11.30PM

HOOTS MON *Jools lines up a host of stars including The Kooks, right top, and Ronnie Wood, below*

BRIGHTEST JOOLS IN NYE CROWN

A FUN thing to do during the festive season is to watch a Christmas special and guess the time of year it was filmed. There are always tiny clues in the background. Daffodils in full bloom are a good example. Likewise, carol singers performing In The Bleak Midwinter, accompanied by the distant sound of leather on willow and cries of "Howzat!"

That, or a passer-by overheard saying: "Why are those twits off the telly wearing Christmas hats in March?"

The people who actually appear on these shows must find it all rather odd, having to keep up the pretence, to greet each other with cries of "Merry Christmas!" when outside the pavements are melting. But ultimately, hey, where's the harm in all this? It's only telly. It's not as though any of it's real.

Likewise, does it matter that Jools Holland's annual Hootenanny is recorded weeks before it's broadcast? Absolutely not. For me, it's still the best of the New Year's Eve TV options.

Typically running for two hours, it's the sort of show where you can dip in and out as you please, devote your full attention, or just have playing in the background, to be turned up for the good bits and muted for the sort of stuff they'd give five stars to in The Guardian.

Plus, it doesn't have fireworks. So my dog is a particular fan. Funnily enough, she especially likes Lulu, Ronnie Wood, Olivia Dean, Jessie J, Imelda May, Craig David, Heather Small, The Kooks, Ruby Turner, swing drummer David Hemlin and Mercury Prize-nominated pianist Joe Webb. So she's going to absolutely love tonight's show, because Jools invited all those people to be on it, and they all said yes.

She wishes he'd also invited Jarvis Cocker and Bruce Springersteen, but only to enable me to crack that joke. And, look, I've gone ahead and cracked it in any case. Happy days.

I still can't help but chuckle, though, when Jools does his countdown to midnight, the pipers march in playing Auld Lang Syne and the celebrity guests are asked what their New Year's resolutions are.

"Haven't a clue yet, Jools," I'd want to reply. "Can I let you know on New Year's Eve, in three weeks' time?"

BEST CHAT

THE GRAHAM NORTON NEW YEAR'S EVE SHOW, BBC1, 10.30PM

Graham is joined by actor Tom Hiddleston, who is returning as spy Jonathan Pine in The Night Manager on New Year's Day.

BEST LAUGHS

THE LAST LEG OF THE YEAR, CHANNEL 4, 9PM

Among the special guests joining Adam Hills, Josh Widdicombe and Alex Brooker are Lenny Henry, Phil Wang, Dani Dyer and Pete Doherty.

BEST SITCOM

HERE WE GO, BBC1, 8PM

We join the clan with Rachel keen to throw a massive New Year's Eve party. But her husband Paul prefers a trip to a nice quiet holiday cottage.

BEST SOAP

EMMERDALE, ITV1, 7.30PM

Ray has a ghastly job ahead, while someone's life remains at risk and there is a dramatic end to the year.

TODAY'S PREVIEWS ARE ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE

FILM RATINGS

★★★★★ BRILLIANT
★★★★ VERY GOOD
★★★ GOOD
★★ AVERAGE
★ BAD

(R) REPEAT

ALL PROGRAMMES ARE LISTED IN GREENWICH MEAN TIME (GMT).

BBC One

6.00am Breakfast News headlines.
9.10 Superworm Animation. (R)
9.35 FILM Marcel the Shell with Shoes On (2022, PG) Premiere. Animated comedy with the voice of Jenny Slate. ★★★★
11.00 Celebrity Homes Under the Hammer In Cornwall. (R)
12.00noon Bargain Hunt (R)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.30 The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse Animation. (R)
2.00 FILM Back to the Future Part III (1990, PG) Time-travelling teenager Marty McFly is transported back to the Wild West to save his scientist friend from death. Sci-fi comedy sequel, with Michael J Fox and Christopher Lloyd. ★★★★
3.55 FILM Despicable Me 3 (2017, U) Dismissed from the Anti-Villain League after botching a mission, Gru sets off to meet his long-lost twin brother. Animation, with the voice of Steve Carell. ★★★★
5.15 Pointless Celebrities (R)
6.05 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 Regional News; Weather

BBC Two

6.35am Celebrity Escape to the Country Chesney Hawkes. (R)
7.35 Sign Zone: Antiques Roadshow Highlights. (R)
8.35 Match of the Day (R)
9.50 Weatherman Walking Walks in Snowdonia and Blaenavon World Heritage Park.
10.20 Winter's Weirdest Events Unusual natural events that occur during the season. (R)
10.50 FILM Funny Girl (1968, U) Musical biopic of 1920s singer and comedienne Fanny Brice, who rose from a life of poverty to stardom on Broadway. Starring an Oscar-winning Barbra Streisand, alongside Omar Sharif. ★★★★
1.10pm FILM West Side Story (1961, PG) Leonard Bernstein's musical inspired by Romeo and Juliet, with Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer. ★★★★★
3.35 Kiss Me, Kate Adrian Dunbar and Stephanie J Block lead a stellar cast in a production of Cole Porter's musical comedy.
6.00 Top of the Pops Review of the Year A look back over the past year in music.

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain A lively mix of news, current affairs and lifestyle features.
9.00 James Martin's Great British Adventure (R)
9.25 FILM Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (1968, U) Musical adventure, with Dick Van Dyke and Lionel Jeffries. ★★★★
12.20pm ITV News; Weather
12.30 Regional News; Weather
12.35 FILM The Goonies (1985, 12) The discovery of a treasure map plunges seven kids into the adventure of a lifetime to save their homes from developers. Family adventure, starring Sean Astin. ★★★★
2.55 FILM Dirty Dancing (1987, 12) A dance instructor at a 1960s resort teaches a naive teenager about self-expression as they perform in an important show. Romantic drama, with Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey. ★★★★
5.00 Tipping Point: Lucky Stars With Olly Smith, Jo Brand and Vicky Pattison. (R)
6.00 The Chase Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R)

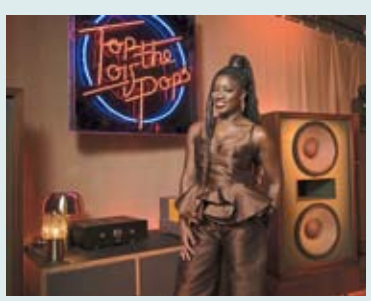
Channel 4

6.35am Cheers Double bill. (R)
7.30 Everybody Loves Raymond Triple bill of the sitcom. (R)
8.50 Frasier Double bill. (R)
9.50 Junior Bake Off (R)
11.20 Chateau DIY at Christmas (R)
12.20pm Channel 4 News
12.25 FILM Steel Magnolias (1989, PG) The close friendship between six women from different generations helps them to survive life's changing fortunes. Drama, starring Sally Field, Julia Roberts and Dolly Parton. ★★★★
2.50 Four in a Bed Five episodes. This week's competition begins at Newquay Beach Hotel; at Devon Heaven Hideaways; from Tin Can Retreat; the week's final visit is at The Thorverton Arms in Devon; payment day. (R)
5.20 Channel 4 News
5.50 Nordic Train at Christmas Behind the scenes on the Bergen Line, a railway built in 1909 between Bergen and Oslo that features views of fjords and snow-white vistas. (R)

5

6.00am Milkshake! Children's TV.
9.10 Entertainment News on 5
9.20 Trucking Hell Highlights. (R)
9.40 FILM Joe Kidd (1972, 15) A bounty hunter is hired by a businessman to capture a Mexican rebel. Western, with Clint Eastwood. ★★
11.30 FILM Rio Lobo (1970, PG) A former Union colonel heads for Texas to recover stolen gold bullion and settle old scores. Western, starring John Wayne and Jorge Rivero. ★★★★
1.55 5 News at Lunchtime
2.00 FILM Zulu (1964, PG) Fact-based historical drama about two British Army officers who rallied a small force of men against the might of 4,000 Zulu warriors in 1879. With Michael Caine. ★★★★
4.50 FILM Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides (2011, 12) Captain Jack Sparrow's search for the fountain of youth leads to a battle with the dreaded pirate Blackbeard. Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Johnny Depp. ★★★★

6.40pm, THE WEAKEST LINK: PARTY SPECIAL: Patsy Palmer



6pm, TOP OF THE POPS REVIEW…: Clara Amfo

9pm, PRETTY WOMAN: Julia Roberts

9pm, THE LAST LEG OF THE YEAR: Adam Hills (centre)

11.35pm, JANE MCDONALD'S NEW YEAR'S SINGALONG: Jane

7

6.40 The Weakest Link: Party Special Charlotte Crosby, Patsy Palmer, Ian 'H' Watkins and Fatiha El-Ghorri take part.
7.30 EastEnders During the New Year Celebrations, the Brannings turn on one of their own, and Phil offers advice.

7.00 Richard Osman's Festive House of Games With Alex Brooker, Rhys Darby, Joanna Page and Molly Rainford.
7.30 Celebrity Mastermind Tia Kofi, Lauren Patel, Josh Jones and Izzie Balmer are in the black chair. With Clive Myrie.

7.00 ITV Evening News The latest headlines; Weather
7.10 Regional News; Weather
7.30 Emmerdale Drama from the Dales. Ray has a ghastly job ahead, while someone's life is still very much at risk and there is a dramatic end to the year.

6.40 FILM Jumanji: The Next Level (2019, 12) Players of Jumanji return, but as they attempt to rescue one of their own, they will have to brave parts unknown from arid deserts to snowy mountains, to escape the world's most dangerous game. Director Jake Kasdan's fantasy adventure sequel to his 2017 rebooted hit Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle, starring Dwayne Johnson, Karen Gillan, Jack Black, Kevin Hart, Nick Jonas and Awkwafina. ★★★★

7.30 World's Strongest Man 2025 Action from the fifth and final heat, held in Sacramento. The last of the groups was arguably the most competitive with Great Britain's Luke Stoltman hunting a sixth Grand Final appearance against 2024 podium finisher Evan Singleton. Presented by James Richardson, Eddie Hall and Michelle Ackerley, with commentary by Colin Bryce and Danny Wallace.

8

8.00 Here We Go Festive special. The Jessop family celebrates the new year – Rachel is keen to throw a party, but Paul would rather a cottage trip.
8.30 FILM Mission: Impossible (1996, PG) Secret agents suspect there is a traitor in their organisation when their latest assignment ends in disaster. The sole survivor is accused of being the mole, forcing him to go on the run to clear his name. However, in the process, he discovers a former Russian spy is selling information about the world's leading undercover operatives. Action thriller, starring Tom Cruise, Jon Voight and Ving Rhames. ★★★★

8.00 Only Connect: Third-Place Play-Off Play-Off Special Winners of the play-offs from different series compete.
8.30 Christmas University Challenge It's the first semi-final of this special all-star seasonal series.

8.00 Coronation Street Drama from the cobbles. Kit enlists Asha's help in his investigation, Ryan voices suspicions of Carl fiddling the hotel accounts, and Todd anxiously awaits Theo's arrival for New Year's Eve in the Rovers.

8.30 Abba vs Queen: Who Are the Greatest? A panel of musicians, composers, critics and industry insiders analyse the relative merits of two of the biggest bands in history to see who truly reigns supreme. The programme dives deep into the archives and crunches the data, from sales, streams and awards to uncover who comes out on top. (R)

9

9.00 Titanic Sinks Tonight The last wooden lifeboat leaves and the passengers and crew face their fates, with those on the lifeboats making a decision to risk saving others or prioritise their own survival. Last in series.

9.00 FILM Pretty Woman (1990, 15) A ruthless millionaire hires a prostitute while on a business trip. Realising she may be useful in helping him keep up a successful appearance, he pays her to accompany him for a week as he associates with the rich and powerful – but falls in love despite their many differences. Romantic comedy, starring Julia Roberts, Richard Gere, Ralph Bellamy, Laura San Giacomo, Jason Alexander, Hector Elizondo, Alex Hyde-White and Amy Yasbeck. ★★★★

9.00 The Last Leg of the Year Presenter Adam Hills, and regular co-hosts Josh Widdicombe and Alex Brooker dive into the year's most ridiculous headlines with celebrity guests, comedians Lenny Henry, Phil Wang and Maisie Adam, presenter Dani Dyer, musicians Pete Doherty and Alex James, England footballer Lucy Bronze, and English rugby union star Hannah Botterman. Plus, a special surprise from one of this year's Celebrity Traitors.

10

10.00 FILM The Full Monty (1997, 15) Six unemployed men from Sheffield decide the only way to earn some money is to become a strip act – for one night only. Comedy, with Robert Carlyle, Tom Wilkinson and Mark Addy. ★★★★
10.15 BBC News at Ten
10.30 The Graham Norton New Year's Eve Show The host rings in the new year in the company Tom Hiddleston, Laura Dern, Will Arnett, Carey Mulligan, Tim Key and Owen Cooper. With Alison Limerick.

10.00 The Unseen Tapes: Abba, the Carpenters & Dolly Parton Rare performance footage of Abba, the Carpenters and Dolly Parton, featuring respective hits including Mamma Mia, Close to You, and Jolene. (R)

11

11.30 Ronan Keating and Friends: New Year's Eve Party The former Boyzone frontman performs his greatest hits. Continues at 12.15am.

11.30 Jools' Annual Hootenanny Jools Holland and his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra welcome in the new year with Ronnie Wood, Olivia Dean, Lulu, Jessie J, Imelda May, Craig David, Heather Small and the Kooks.

11.20 The Assembly: Unseen Unseen questions from David Tennant, Gary Lineker, Danny Dyer and Jade Thirlwall's interviews with an audience of neurodivergent individuals. (R)
11.50 ITV News; Weather including New Year Bongs

11.00 Gogglebox 2025 As the Gogglebox hang up their Christmas stockings, a bumper edition of the show takes a very merry look back at the best, and sometimes the worst, of 2025's television programmes. (R)

11.35 Jane McDonald's New Year's Singalong Jane McDonald looks ahead to the New Year, while belting out a party playlist of floor fillers, showstoppers and toe-tapping tunes. Plus, a few celebrity surprises. (R)

12 MIDNIGHT

12.00m't New Year's Eve Fireworks 2025. The people of London welcome in the new year with the chimes of Big Ben. **12.15** Ronan Keating and Friends: New Year's Eve Party **12.45** Rod Stewart at Glastonbury 2025 (R) **2.15** Weather for the Week Ahead **2.20-6.00am** BBC News

1.40am 30 Hits of 1988 at the BBC. A journey through the BBC's music archives for a selection of songs from the year, including Kylie Minogue, and Glenn Medeiros. (R) **3.25** Sign Zone: The Great British Sewing Bee Celebrity Christmas Special (R) **4.25-6.20am** This Is BBC Two

12.10am It'll Be Alright on the Night (R) **12.40** Westlife 25: Live at the Royal Albert Hall (R) **1.30** The Big Quiz: Coronation Street v Emmerdale (R) **2.25** Gallagher PREM Unleashed (R) **2.50** TikTok: Top 100 2024 (R) **4.25** Ant and Dec's Limitless Win Christmas Special (R) **5.20-6.00am** Unwind

12.55am 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Christmas Special (R) **1.50 FILM** Oasis: Supersonic (2016, 15) Documentary about the Manchester band's early years. ★★★★ **4.00** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It (R) **4.55** George Clarke's Old House, New Home (R) **5.50-6.15am** Cheers (R)

1.05am PlayOJO Live Casino Show **3.00** Music Videos That Defined the 80s. Memorable and iconic music videos. (R) **3.50** Friends (R) **5.00** Entertainment News on 5 **5.05** The Adventures of Paddington (R) **5.30** Pip and Posy (R) **5.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom (R) **5.45-6.00am** Milo (R)

ITV2 FREEVIEW 6

6.00am CITV **7.45** I'm a Celebrity… Get Me Out of Here! Coming Out **8.45** Celebrity Dinner Date **11.45** Celebrity Wheel of Fortune **12.50pm** Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special **1.50** Celebrity Catchphrase **2.50** FILM Ice Age: Collision Course (2016, U) Animated sequel. ★★★ **4.40** FILM New Year's Eve (2011, 12) Comedy drama, with Michelle Pfeiffer and Robert De Niro. ★★★

6.55 FILM **Johnny English Reborn** (2011, PG) Spy comedy sequel, starring Rowan Atkinson, Gillian Anderson, Rosamund Pike and Dominic West. ★★★

9.00 FILM **Godzilla vs Kong** (2021, 12) Sci-fi adventure, starring Alexander Skarsgard and Millie Bobby Brown. ★★★

11.15 Family Guy Animated double bill.

12.10am American Dad! **1.05** Deep Fake Neighbour Wars – Best Bust Ups **1.40** Deep Fake Neighbour Wars **2.10** Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special **3.05** Secret Crush **4.50-6.00am** Unwind with ITV

ITVQuiz FREEVIEW 28

9.00am Lingo **10.00** Tenable **11.00** Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Celebrity Special **12.00noon** Beat the Chasers **1.00** Ant & Dec's Limitless Win **2.00** Tipping Point **3.00** Tenable **4.00** Bullseye **5.05** Wheel of Fortune

6.05 Lingo Adam and Natalie and Louise and Samice take part on the quiz.

7.05 Ant & Dec's Limitless Win Arj and Charlotte are back to continue their game.

8.05 Bullseye Christmas Special Freddie Flintoff hosts a revival of the darts-based game show in which three pairs try to win prizes, with teenage professional Luke Littler joining for a charity challenge.

9.05 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Celebrity Special Laura Kenny and Krishnan Guru-Murthy compete.

10.10 Beat the Chasers More contestants hope that they can Beat the Chasers.

11.10 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts.

12.05am Bullseye Christmas Special **1.05-2.00am** Wheel of Fortune

BBC3 FREEVIEW 23

7.00pm The Catch Up The news.

7.05 Shaun the Sheep: Fleece Navidad Farmer Ben delivers his perfect Christmas card.

7.10 FILM **Chicken Run** (2000, U) Animated adventures. ★★★★

8.30 Here We Go Rachel tries to plan a classic Jessop family Christmas.

9.00 Gladiators: Celebrity Special

10.00 FILM **Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical** (2022, PG) Musical, starring Alisha Weir. ★★★★★

11.50 Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special 2013 Comedy.

12.30am Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special 2015 **1.00** Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special 2016 **1.35** Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special 2017 **2.05** Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special 2018 **2.40** Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special 2019 **3.15** Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special 2020 **3.45-4.00am** Quiet Life

BBC4 FREEVIEW 9

7.00pm TOTP2 New Year Special Steve Wright presents party tunes for New Year's Eve, featuring the Three Degrees, Elton John, Blondie, the Nolans, Lionel Richie, the Bee Gees, Madonna and Kylie Minogue.

8.15 Talking Pictures The story of Steven Spielberg's classic aquatic horror classic – Jaws.

9.00 FILM **Jaws** (1975, 12) A seaside town's police chief has to deal with a giant killer shark preying on tourists. Steven Spielberg's thriller, starring Roy Scheider, Richard Dreyfuss and Robert Shaw. ★★★★★

11.00 FILM **Jaws 2** (1978, PG) Director Jeannot Szwarc's thriller sequel, starring Roy Scheider, Lorraine Gary and Murray Hamilton. ★★★

12.50am Jaws @ 50: The Definitive Inside Story. Documentary. **2.15** Talking Pictures **3.00-4.00am** Best of Seven Worlds, One Planet

GB News FREEVIEW 236

6.00am Breakfast with Eamonn and Ellie **9.30** Britain's Newsroom **12.00noon** Good Afternoon Britain **3.00** Martin Daubney. Updates.

6.00 Dewbs & Co Plain-speaking, straight-talking – Michelle Dewberry delivers her take on the day's news.

7.00 Farage An action-packed hour of topical discussion and debate.

8.00 Jacob Rees-Mogg's State Of The Nation Join Jacob for his unique and unmissable take on the news.

9.00 Patrick Christys Tonight The latest topical discussion and debate.

10.00 New Year's Eve Live Join the GB News family to welcome 2026 in style with a New Year's special.

1.00am Farage Replay. Discussion. **2.00** Dewbs & Co **3.00** Patrick Christys Tonight Replay **4.00** Jacob Rees-Mogg's State Of The Nation Replay **5.00-6.00am** Patrick Christys Tonight Replay

U&Dave FREEVIEW 19

6.00am Teleshopping **7.25** Top Gear Winter Olympics Special **8.20** Top Gear Vietnam Special **10.00** World's Most Dangerous Roads **11.00** Red Bull Soapbox Race 2022 **1.00pm** Would I Lie to You? **3.00** Top Gear Botswana Special **4.00** Top Gear **5.40** Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Hogmanay Fishing

7.00 Would I Lie to You? Triple bill.

9.00 QI XL Ulex and uncommon U words.

10.00 Not Going Out New Year Special 2020: Resolutions Lee and Lucy's New Year's Eve celebrations do not go according to plan, as everyone feels compelled to point out which New Year's resolution friends and family need to make.

11.00 Would I Lie to You? Double bill.

12.20am Mock the Week **1.40** Would I Lie to You? **2.15** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Dubrovnik **2.40** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Krakow **3.05** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Bergen **3.35** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Madrid **4.00-6.00am** Teleshopping

U&Drama FREEVIEW 20

7.40am Doctors **8.45** Classic Holby City **9.50** Classic Casualty **11.05** The Bill **12.10pm** Classic EastEnders **1.30** Miss Marple **3.30** Bergerac

6.00 Last of the Summer Wine Triple bill.

8.00 Darby and Joan Retired British nurse Joan teams up with retired detective Darby to probe a suspicious death.

9.00 Sister Boniface Mysteries When local resident Hillary is found dead, face covered in cold cream next to an unfinished jigsaw, it becomes clear to Boniface a pattern is forming.

10.00 New Tricks The team's feathers are ruffled by the arrival of a retired detective from Glasgow brought in to help reinvestigate one of his original cases. Denis Lawson joins the cast.

11.20 Waking the Dead Part two of two. The team is quarantined while Spencer goes in search of a suspect.

12.40am Hotel Portofino **1.55** A Small Light **2.50-4.00am** Darby and Joan

E4 FREEVIEW 13

6.00am The Snowman **6.30** The Snowman and the Snowdog **6.55** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **8.50** The Goldbergs **9.50** The Simpsons **11.20** Mog's Christmas **11.55** The Snowman **12.30pm** The Snowman and the Snowdog **1.05** The Simpsons

6.15 FILM **Independence Day** (1996, 12) The US president leads the fight against a force of seemingly indestructible aliens intent on conquering Earth. Sci-fi adventure, starring Will Smith. ★★★★

9.00 FILM **The Inbetweeners Movie** (2011, 15) Teenagers Simon, Will, Jay and Neil head to Greece for a wild holiday – but things do not go to plan. Comedy, with Joe Thomas, Simon Bird, James Buckley and Blake Harrison. ★★★★

11.00 The Inbetweeners Double bill.

12.05am The Inbetweeners **1.15** Gogglebox **2.20** Naked Attraction **3.15** The Inbetweeners **4.10** The Goldbergs **5.00-6.00am** Don't Tell the Bride

More4 FREEVIEW 18

8.55am A Place in the Sun **10.25** Find It, Fix It, Flog It **12.30pm** FILM Lawrence of Arabia (1962, PG) An enigmatic British Army officer tries to unite the Arab nations against the Turks during the First World War. Oscar-winning drama, starring Peter O'Toole. ★★★★★ **4.50** A Place in the Sun

6.55 Grand Designs Double bill. A couple attempt to build Britain's first hypoallergenic house; a chef building a double-kitchen home in south London.

9.00 24 Hours in A&E Double bill. A moped delivery man is rushed to A&E after an accident involving a police car; a 40-year-old man injured in a bike crash may require emergency surgery.

11.05 999: On the Front Line A recovering alcoholic needs help, and a 10-year-old suffering from chest pains is discovered to be taking anti-psychotic medication.

12.10am Emergency Helicopter Medics **1.15** 24 Hours in A&E **3.25-3.55am** Food Unwrapped's Deep South Adventure

Variations & S4C

WALES As BBC1 except: 1.20-1.30pm BBC Wales Today. Today's headlines; Weather **6.30-6.40pm** BBC Wales Today; Weather

MERIDIAN As ITV1 except: 12.30-12.35pm ITV News Meridian. Today's headlines; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News Meridian; Weather

CENTRAL As ITV1 except: 12.30-12.35pm ITV News Central. Today's headlines; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News Central; Weather

ITV WALES As ITV1 except: 12.30-12.35pm ITV News Cymru Wales; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News Wales at Six. Headlines; Weather

WEST As ITV1 except: 12.30-12.35pm ITV News West Country; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News West Country. Headlines; Weather

ANGLIA As ITV1 except: 12.30-12.35pm ITV News Anglia. The day's headlines; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News Anglia; Weather

WESTCOUNTRY As ITV1 except: 12.30-12.35pm ITV News West Country; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News West Country; Weather

S4C 6.00am Cyw **12.00noon** Cymry ar Gynfas **12.30pm** Sgwrs Dan y Lloer **1.15** Y Deis **2.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **2.05** Iolo: Natur Bregus Cymru **3.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **3.05** Priodas Pum Mil **4.00** Awr Fawr **5.00** Stwnsh **6.15** Rownd a Rownd. Iestyn regrets kissing Britney at the wedding. **6.40** Stuart Burrows: Brenin y Tenoriaid. Aled Hall presents a tribute to Welsh tenor Stuart Burrows who passed away in June 2025, featuring memories of those who knew him well and who were close to him. **7.25** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **7.40** Y Cyfweliad. A group of autistic, neurodiverse and individuals with additional learning needs interview the singer and Welsh campaigner – Dafydd Iwan. **8.15** Y Deis: Nadolig. Game show in which two teams of two rely on a combination of knowledge, strategy and, like any roll of the dice, a little bit of luck. **9.00** Pobol y Cwm. A familiar face returns to the village. **9.30** Noson Lawen. New Year celebrations, with jazz from Steffan Hughes and his friends. With classic hits featuring Welsh stars of the West End along with guest soloists. **10.30** Heno. Counting down to the new year with a performance from Rose Datta. **12.05-1.10am** Bronwen Lewis: O'r Ystafell Fyw. Bronwen prepares for her Living Room tour.

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Sport

SKY SPORTS MAIN EVENT

6.00am Sky Sports News. Round-up of the sports news. **7.00** Sky Sports Breakfast **8.00** The Best of the Big Bash League
8.10 LIVE **Big Bash League** Adelaide Strikers v Brisbane Heat. Coverage from Adelaide Oval.
11.30 LIVE **SA20** Sunrisers Eastern Cape v Paarl Royals. Coverage of the match at St George's Park Cricket Ground in Gqeberha.
2.30pm Sports Desk. The latest headlines.
3.30 LIVE **SA20** MI Cape Town v Pretoria Capitals.
7.00 LIVE **NBA Basketball** Charlotte Hornets v Golden State Warriors (Tip-off 6.00pm).
8.30 Rory's 2025 **10.00** Sky Sports News
5.00-6.00am LIVE **Big Bash League** Melbourne Renegades v Sydney Sixers.

SKY SPORTS CRICKET

6.00am Big Bash League **7.00** Best of J Anderson: 500th Wicket **7.10** Big Bash League
8.10 LIVE **Big Bash League** Adelaide Strikers v Brisbane Heat. Coveragefrom Adelaide Oval.
11.30 LIVE **SA20** Sunrisers Eastern Cape v Paarl Royals. From St George's Park Cricket Ground.
2.30pm Best of England v South Africa **2.45** Best of ICC WT20 **3.00** Best of J Anderson: 500th Wicket **3.10** Best of Sky Cricket
3.20 LIVE **SA20** MI Cape Town v Pretoria Capitals.
7.00 Big Bash League **8.00** Big Bash League **9.00** SA20 **10.00** SA20 **11.00** Big Bash League
2.20am Best of J Anderson: 500th Wicket **2.30** Best of England v South Africa **2.45** Best of ICC WT20 **3.00** Big Bash League
4.55-6.00am LIVE **Big Bash League** Melbourne Renegades v Sydney Sixers.

SKY SPORTS FOOTBALL

6.00am EFL **9.00** EFL Greatest Games **10.00** Championship Retro **12.00noon** EFL League One Goals **12.30** EFL League Two Goals **1.00** EFL Highlights **3.00** EFL Cup **4.00** EFL
6.00 EFL Cup Highlights **7.00** Bundesliga Special: Midseason Review **8.00** EFL League One Goals **8.30** EFL League Two Goals **9.00** SPFL Round-Up **9.15** EFL Highlights **9.30** EFL Highlights **9.45** EFL Highlights **10.00** EFL Highlights **10.15** EFL Highlights **10.30** EFL **10.45** EFL **11.00** EFL Greatest Games
12.00m't EFL Cup Retro **2.45** EFL Greatest Games **4.00** Championship Season Review **5.00** Craig Brown: My Scotland **5.30-6.00am** There's Only One Sauzee

SKY SPORTS GOLF

6.00am US Open Official Films **8.00** US Open Golf
4.30pm ANWA Official Film 2025 **5.30** PGA Championship Official Films **6.30** AIG Women's Open Official Film 2025 **7.30** The Open – Official Films **8.30** Rory's 2025 **10.00** Masters Official Film 2025 **11.00** 2025 PGA Tour Year in Review **12.00m't** US Open Official Films **1.00** The Players Championship Official Film **2.00-6.00am** US Open Official Films

TNT SPORTS 1

6.30am TNT Sports Cricket Reload
8.00 LIVE **Isuzu UTE A-League** Central Coast Mariners v Brisbane Roar (kick-off 8.00am).
10.00 Premier League – The Big Interview **10.30** TNT Sports Cricket Reload **11.00** WRC
11.45 LIVE **Ski Jumping World Cup** Coverage from Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.
1.30pm Original Documentary
2.45 LIVE **Ski Jumping World Cup** Four Hills qualifying from Garmisch-Partenkirchen.
4.15 For The Love Of The Game With Laura & Ally **4.30** The Gruppetto **5.00** Isuzu UTE A-League
6.00 The Edge **7.00** Premier League Netbusters **7.30** Premier League Stories **8.00** Sign Up – Into Football **8.45** For The Love Of The Game With Laura & Ally **9.00** Ski Jumping World Cup **9.30** The Breakdown **10.00** The Edge **11.00** Ninja A-League Women Highlights **11.30** Isuzu UTE A-League **12.30am** Serie A – Full Impact **1.00** Hard Knocks: In Season with the NFC East **2.00** MLB Plays of the Week **3.00** Ski Jumping World Cup **3.30** The Gruppetto **4.00** TNT Sports Reload **4.15** Cricket Reload
4.45-8.15am LIVE **T20 Super Smash** A match from New Zealand's domestic T20 competition.

TNT SPORTS 2

7.15am Superbike World Championship **8.15** MotoGP **9.15** MotoGP **9.45** IBSF World Cup
10.15 LIVE **Cross Country Skiing World Cup** Coverage from Toblach, Italy.
11.45 SailGP **12.15pm** SailGP Highlights
1.15 LIVE **Cross Country Skiing World Cup** Coverage from Toblach, Italy.
3.00 MotoGP Films **3.30** Training Day **4.00** Kenny Allstar's Number 1's **4.30** Premier League Netbusters **5.00** Premier League Stories **5.30** UIM F1H2O World Championship Highlights
6.00 TNT Sports Reload **6.30** Serie A – Full Impact **7.00** British Superbikes **8.30** MotoGP **9.30** Hard Knocks: In Season with the NFC East **10.30** FIM Speedway Grand Prix **11.30** MotoE **3.00am** Isuzu UTE A-League
4.00-6.00am LIVE **Isuzu UTE A-League** Auckland FC v Newcastle Jets (kick-off 4.00am).

BEST OF THE REST – LIVE SPORT

10.50am LIVE **SA20** Coverage of Sunrisers Eastern Cape v Paarl Royals. (Sky Sports +)
6.00-8.30pm LIVE **NBA Basketball** Charlotte Hornets v Golden State Warriors. (Sky Sports +)

Entertainment & Factual

ITV3 Freeview 10

6.00am Never the Twain **7.00** On the Buses **8.05** Lewis **10.10** Agatha Christie's Marple **12.15pm** The Darling Buds of May **2.25** FILM Holiday on the Buses (1973/PG) ★ **4.10** FILM Carry On Cruising (1962/U) ★★ **5.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **8.00** Vera **10.00** Midsomer Murders **1.50am** The Larkins **3.35** Never the Twain **4.25** On the Buses **5.20-6.00am** Unwind with ITV

ITV4 Freeview 26

6.00am Football League Legends **6.10** Motorsport Mundial **6.40** Kojak **12.00noon** English Football League Highlights **1.30** Made in Britain **2.00** Gallagher PREM Unleashed **3.05** FILM Battle of the Bulge (1965/PG) ★★★★ **6.20** FILM Force 10 from Navarone (1978/15) A commando mission to destroy a bridge in the Balkans that is vital to the Nazis is jeopardised by a traitor. Second World War adventure, starring Harrison Ford and Robert Shaw. ★★★★ **9.00** FILM Crimson Tide (1995/15) A veteran US submarine captain clashes with his first officer over whether to launch their nuclear weapons. Thriller, with Gene Hackman, Denzel Washington and Viggo Mortensen. ★★★★ **11.15** All Elite Wrestling: Collision **1.40am** Sharpe **3.30** The Sweeney **5.25-6.00am** Unwind with ITV

5STAR Freeview 32

8.00am Entertainment News on 5 **8.10** Car Pound Cops: Give Me My Car Back! **8.45** Police Interceptors **12.50pm** FILM Percy Jackson & the Lightning Thief (2010/PG) ★★★ **3.15** FILM Into the Storm (2014/12) Premiere. Disaster movie, starring Richard Armitage. ★★ **5.00** FILM Geostorm (2017/12) Sci-fi thriller, starring Gerard Butler. ★★★ **7.10** FILM Along Came Polly (2004/12) An obsessive man's orderly routine is thrown into disarray when a wildly spontaneous old friend walks back into his life. Romantic comedy, with Ben Stiller and Jennifer Aniston. ★★ **9.00** FILM There's Something About Mary (1998/15) A lovesick man hires a seedy detective to track down his high-school sweetheart – but discovers he has many rivals for her affections. Comedy, starring Cameron Diaz and Ben Stiller. ★★★★ **11.25** FILM About a Boy (2002/12) A womaniser who poses as a father to meet single women changes his ways after befriending a lonely youngster. Romantic comedy, with Hugh Grant, Toni Collette and Nicholas Hoult. ★★★★ **1.35** When Parties Go Horribly Wrong **3.30-4.00am** Motorway Patrol

REALLY Freeview 17

6.00am Fantasy Homes by the Sea **7.00** Cruise TV with LoveitBookit **8.00** The Repair Shop **1.00pm** Antiques Road Trip **6.00** The Repair Shop **7.00** Antiques Road Trip **8.00** The Yorkshire Auction House **10.00** Long Lost Family **12.00m't** Help! My House Is Haunted **1.00** Celebrity Help! My House Is Haunted **2.00** Teleshopping **4.00-6.00am** Salvage Hunters

5ACTION Freeview 33

9.00am Entertainment News on 5 **9.15** Ice Road Truckers **11.10** FILM Red River (1948/U) ★★★★★ **1.55** FILM North to Alaska (1960/U) ★★★★ **4.30** FILM Rio Lobo (1970/PG) ★★★★ **7.00** FILM The Train Robbers (1973/U) A thief's widow persuades a gunslinger to help her find a cache of her husband's stolen gold and return it to the rightful owners. Western, starring John Wayne and Ann-Margret. ★★★ **9.00** FILM Big Jake (1971/15) A tough Texan rancher hits the trail to rescue his beloved grandson from kidnappers who are demanding a $1million ransom. Western, with John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara. ★★ **11.15** FILM Joe Kidd (1972/15) Western, starring Clint Eastwood. ★★ **1.05** World's Deadliest Weather: Caught on Camera **2.10** Trucking Hell **3.15** Highway Patrol **3.50-4.00am** Entertainment News on 5

Harry Potter 20th Anniversary: Return To Hogwarts
Sky Max, 9pm
Another chance to see the likes of Emma Watson (left) celebrating two decades since the franchise's first film, *Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone*.

SKY ARTS Freeview 36

6.00am Pavarotti: 10th Anniversary Gala **7.15** The Joy of Painting **8.15** Tales of the Unexpected **8.45** FILM My Fair Lady (1964/U) ★★★★ **12.00noon** FILM The Great Gatsby (1974/12) ★★★ **2.40** Michael Flatley – Lord of the Dance: Dangerous Games **4.30** Nicola Benedetti & Friends **6.00** Battle of the Irish Dancers **7.00** FILM Barefoot in the Park (1967/PG) A newlywed couple move into a small, shabby flat in New York's Greenwich Village and have to deal with oddball neighbours. Neil Simon's comedy, with Robert Redford and Jane Fonda. ★★★★ **9.10** Andre Rieu: New Year's Eve Punch **11.25** Andre Rieu: New Year's Eve in Vienna **1.40am** Sammy Davis Jr: Legends in Concert **2.45** Sean Connery vs James Bond **4.00** Classic Albums **5.00-6.00am** The Art of Architecture

U&GOLD

7.15am Only Fools and Horses **5.00pm** Fawlty Towers: The Play. Three of Fawlty Towers' most iconic episodes in a single theatrical experience. **7.00** Only Fools and Horses **12.35am** Not Going Out **1.15** Only Fools and Horses **3.25-4.00am** Not Going Out

U&YESTERDAY Freeview 27

6.10am Great Coastal Railway Journeys **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics **10.00** The World at War **1.00pm** Bangers & Cash **3.00** Planet Earth II **4.00** Frozen Planet **6.00** Red Dwarf **8.00** Abandoned Engineering. Exploring a top-secret military base in Michigan linked to an unexplained disappearance. **9.00** Mega Metro. Crews race to install tracks, cabling, ventilation, safety systems and 900,000 plants. Last in series. **10.00** Bangers & Cash **12.00m't** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics **2.00-3.00am** Frozen Planet

U&ALIBI

7.15am Murdoch Mysteries **9.00** Father Brown **11.00** Death in Paradise **9.40pm** Father Brown. Double bill. Brenda finds love at the home of a clock collector; a group of bikers causes outrage. **11.40** Death in Paradise **2.25am** Murdoch Mysteries **3.10-4.00am** Allegiance

SKY MAX

6.00am Flintoff: From Lord's to the Ring **7.00** Joe Lycett's United States of Birmingham **11.00** Brassic **5.00pm** Rob & Romesh vs Bollywood **6.00** Rob & Romesh vs Hip Hop **7.00** Rob & Romesh vs the Jungle **8.00** Rob & Romesh vs Shakespeare **9.00** Harry Potter 20th Anniversary: Return to Hogwarts **11.00** Friends: The Reunion **1.00am** David Blaine: Real or Magic? **2.00** David Blaine: Beyond Magic **3.00** A League of Their Own: Mexican Road Trip **5.00-6.00am** Highway Patrol

SKY ATLANTIC

6.00am House of the Dragon. Fantasy drama. **10.25pm** Game of Thrones **3.55am** All Her Fault **5.00-6.00am** Fish Town

SKY WITNESS

6.00am Border Patrol **7.00** Nothing to Declare **9.00** Stop, Search, Seize **10.00** UK Border Force **11.00** A1: Britain's Longest Road **12.00noon** FBI **1.00** The Rookie **2.00** Caught on Dashcam **4.00** Nothing to Declare **7.00** Caught on Dashcam **9.00** Doc. A chaplain helps Amy reconcile with the past. **10.00** Caught on Dashcam Winter Special **11.00** Caught on Dashcam **12.00m't** The Rookie **1.00** FBI **3.00** FBI: International **4.00** Stop, Search, Seize **5.00-6.00am** UK Border Force

SKY COMEDY

8.00am Community **11.00** Sex and the City **3.00pm** The Office (US) **9.00** Katherine Ryan: First Born Daughter **10.30** Ricky Gervais: Fame **12.05am** Ricky Gervais Live: Animals **1.30** And Just Like That **2.50** Entourage **3.50-5.00am** Curb Your Enthusiasm

DISCOVERY

6.00am Wheeler Dealers World Tour **7.00** Alaska: Homestead Rescue **9.00** Gold Divers **11.00** Kindig Customs **1.00pm** Deadliest Catch **3.00** Wheeler Dealers World Tour **7.00** Kindig Customs **9.00** Mud Madness. Tensions soar, and every racer is fighting for the prize. **10.00** Wild & Weird America. There's plenty of malfunctions in these clips of man vs. machine. **11.00** Expedition Unknown **12.00m't** Moonshiners **1.00** Mud Madness **2.00** Expedition X **3.00-5.00am** Alaska: Homestead Rescue

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

8.00am Air Crash Investigation **9.00** Inside Melbourne Airport **12.00noon** Aircrash: Disasters Uncovered **1.00** Air Crash Investigation **3.00** Destruction Decoded **4.00** Car S.O.S **7.00** Air Crash Investigation **8.00** Strangest Things. A 200-year-old mechanical man that beat the world's best chess players. **9.00** Tut's Toxic Tomb **11.00** Mysterious Islands **12.00m't** Air Crash Investigation **2.00** To Catch a Smuggler **2.30** Lords of War **3.20-4.10am** Food Factory

Radio

BBC RADIO 1

97.6-99.8MHz 6.00am Radio 1 Breakfast with Mylo and Rosie **10.00** Ore and Swarzy **2.00pm** Radio 1 Dance Party Playlist with Emil and Lauren **6.00** Radio 1 Dance Party Playlist with James Cusack **10.00** Radio 1's New Year with Connor Coates **1.00am** Radio 1's Essential Mix **3.00** Pete Tong **5.00-6.00am** Radio 1's Chillout Anthems

BBC RADIO 2

88-91MHz 6.00am Mark Goodier **9.30** Gary Davies **12.00noon** Sophie Ellis-Bextor NYE Kitchen Disco **2.00** NYE Sounds of the 60s **4.00** NYE Party Sounds of the 70s with Bob Harris **6.00** NYE Party Sounds of the 80s with Gary Davies **8.00** NYE Party Sounds of the 90s with Owain Wyn Evans **10.00** Michelle Visage's Fabulous New Year's Party **1.00am** Sophie Ellis-Bextor's Kitchen Disco **3.00** Alternative Sounds of the 90s with Dermot O'Leary **4.00-6.00am** Tony Blackburn's Sounds of Soul

BBC RADIO 3

90.2-92.4MHz 6.30am Breakfast **9.30** Essential Classics **1.00pm** Classical Live **3.00** Choral Evensong **4.00** Composer of the Week: Icons of British Light Music **5.00** Words and Music **6.15** New Generation Artists **7.00** Proms at Christmas 2025 **10.00** Night Tracks **11.30** 'Round Midnight **12.30-6.30am** Through the Night

BBC RADIO 4

FM 92.4-94.6MHz 6.00am Today **9.00** More or Less **9.30** Two Nottingham Lads **10.00** Woman's Hour **11.00** File on 4 Investigates **11.40** This Week in History **11.45** Larkin Revisited **12.00noon** News **12.02** Archive on 4: Masters of the Impossible **12.57** Weather **1.00** The World at One **1.45** An Almanac of Anxiety: In Search of a Calmer Mind **2.00** The Archers **2.15** Drama: Snow White's Radio Drama Romance **3.00** Money Box **3.30** What Is Quantum? **4.00** The Ideas List **4.15** The Media Show **5.00** PM **5.57** Weather **6.00** News **6.15** Ian Hislop's Oldest Jokes **6.30** Unite **7.00** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.00** Archive on 4: Marvel v DC Comics: Contest of the Champions **9.00** The Life Scientific **9.30** Ramblings **9.55** A Carnival of Animals **10.00** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: A Long Winter **11.00** David Eagle: See No Eagle **11.15** The Squid: Sketch a Minute **11.30** BBC National Short Story Award 2025 **12.00m't** News **12.15** Raising Hare **12.30** Larkin Revisited **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.00** As BBC World Service **5.00** News Summary **5.04** More or Less **5.32** Weather **5.34** Shipping Forecast **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45-6.00am** Farming Today

CHOICE
NYE Party Sounds
Radio 2, from 2pm
Tony Blackburn is getting the New Year's party started with two hours of 60s party anthems. Then, Bob Harris brings listeners the perfect 70s playlist, and Gary Davies has two hours of 80s anthems. Owain Wyn Evans provides a cocktail of 90s hits, before Michelle Visage takes over at 10pm.

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE

693/909kHz 6.00am Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Emma Vardy **2.00pm** Marianna Spring **4.00** Drive **7.00** Sport **8.00** Sinner v Alcaraz **9.00** Boxing **10.00** Must Watch **10.30** Nick Bright **1.00am** Dotun Adebayo **5.00-6.00am** Business Matters

BBC RADIO WALES

FM: 94.6MHz 6.00am Radio Wales News Update **6.05** Wake Up with Radio Wales **6.31** Hidden Merthyr **7.00** Radio Wales Breakfast **9.00** Sam Vaughan **12.00noon** Matt Tebbutt's New Year's Kitchen **2.00** Jonny and Vicky's Day Disco **5.00** Rob and Molly's 70s and 80s **7.00** Molly Palmer's 90s and 00s **10.00** New Year's Eve House Party **1.00-7.00am** As Radio 5 Live

CLASSIC FM

100-102MHz 6.30am Classic FM Breakfast **9.00** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour **10.00** Aled Jones **2.00pm** Margherita Taylor **6.00** Pet Classics with Katie Breathwick **10.00** Pet Classics with Karthi Gnanasegaram **1.00-6.30am** Bill Overton

ABSOLUTE RADIO

DAB 6.00am Jay Lawrence **10.00** Leona Graham **1.00pm** Claire Sturgess **4.00** Emil Franchi **6.00** Indie Disco **8.00** Absolute 80s **10.00** The Absolute Radio Mixtape **1.00-6.00am** The Absolute Radio Mixtape

Movies

FILM4

11.00am Jingle All the Way (1996/PG) Comedy, with Arnold Schwarzenegger. ★★★
12.45pm Deck the Halls (2006/PG) Christmas comedy, starring Danny DeVito. ★★
2.35 The Black Swan (1942/PG) Swashbuckling adventure, with Tyrone Power and Maureen O'Hara. ★★★★
4.15 Little Women (2019/U) Historical drama, starring Saoirse Ronan. ★★★★★
6.55 Sleepless in Seattle (1993/PG) Romantic comedy, with Tom Hanks. ★★★★
9.00 The Equalizer (2014/18) An ex-secret agent fights to bring down a crime syndicate after coming to the aid of an abused prostitute. Action thriller, with Denzel Washington and Chloe Grace Moretz. ★★★★
11.40 Withnail & I (1987/15) Cult black comedy, starring Richard E Grant. ★★★★★
1.50-3.40am Walking and Talking (1996/15) Romantic comedy, with Anne Heche. ★★★

SKY CINEMA PREMIERE

7.05am A Minecraft Movie (2025/PG) See 4.15pm for detail. ★★★★
8.50 Friendship (2024/15) Comedy, starring Paul Rudd and Kate Mara. ★★★★
10.45 Sinners (2025/15) See 8.00pm. ★★★★
1.15pm Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning (2025/12) See 10.30pm. ★★★★
4.15 A Minecraft Movie (2025/PG) Fantasy adventure, starring Jason Momoa. ★★★★
6.05 The Phoenician Scheme (2025/15) Wes Anderson's comedy, starring Benicio Del Toro and Mia Threapleton. ★★★★
8.00 Sinners (2025/15) Twin brothers return to their hometown, and find a dark force waiting to welcome them back. Horror thriller, starring Michael B Jordan and Miles Caton. ★★★★
10.30 Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning (2025/12) Action thriller, starring Tom Cruise and Hayley Atwell. ★★★★
1.30am Friendship (2024/15) See 8.50am for details. ★★★★
3.20 Hallow Road (2025/15) Thriller, starring Rosamund Pike and Matthew Rhys. ★★★★
4.50-6.30am She's Making a List (2025/U) Romantic comedy, starring Lacey Chabert and Alessandro Miro. ★★

SKY CINEMA DRAMA

5.45pm The Blind Side (2009/12) Drama, with Sandra Bullock and Quinton Aaron. ★★★★
8.00 Joker: Folie a Deux (2024/15) Musical thriller, starring Joaquin Phoenix. ★★
10.25 PS I Love You (2007/12) Drama, with Hilary Swank and Gerard Butler. ★★★★
12.45am It Ends With Us (2024/15) Drama, with Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni. ★★★★
3.40-6.00am American Sniper (2014/15) Drama, with Bradley Cooper. ★★★★

SKY CINEMA HARRY POTTER

5.15pm Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (2005/12) Fantasy adventure, starring Daniel Radcliffe and Rupert Grint. ★★★★
7.55 Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (2007/12) Fantasy adventure, with Daniel Radcliffe and Gary Oldman. ★★★★
10.15 Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2009/12) Fantasy adventure, starring Daniel Radcliffe and Michael Gambon. ★★★★
1.00am Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1 (2010/12) Fantasy adventure, starring Daniel Radcliffe. ★★★★
3.35-6.00am Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 (2011/12) Conclusion of the fantasy saga, with Daniel Radcliffe. ★★★★★

TALKING PICTURES TV

4.50pm The Riddle of the Sands (1979/U) Spy thriller, with Simon MacCorkindale. ★★★
6.50 Strange But True
7.25 Scotland Yard
8.00 The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club A special New Year's edition from 1975.
8.50 Crooks Anonymous (1962/U) Comedy, starring Leslie Phillips and Julie Christie. ★★
10.35 New Year's Eve with Mike, Noel and Friends Mike Read and Noel Cronin present a special New Year's variety show.
12.35am Confessions of a Pop Performer (1975/18) Comedy, starring Robin Askwith and Anthony Booth. ★★
2.25 The Man from UNCLE
3.25 The Spiritualist (1948/PG) Thriller, starring Turhan Bey and Lynn Bari. ★★★
5.00-5.50am Calling All Cars

GREAT! MYSTERY

5.00pm Diagnosis Murder
6.00 Sue Thomas: FBEye
7.00 Castle A death at a sci-fi convention.
8.00 Unforgettable Carrie goes undercover.
9.00 An Aurora Teagarden Mystery: Death at the Diner (2024/PG) Mystery, starring Skyler Samuels and Marilu Henner. ★★★★
10.55 Castle A death at a sci-fi convention.
11.55 Unforgettable Carrie goes undercover.
12.55am Target: My Daughter (2017/PG) Thriller, starring Yancy Butler. ★★★
2.35 Gone Missing (2013/12) Thriller, starring Daphne Zuniga and Lauren Bowles. ★★★
4.00-6.00am Home Is Where the Killer Is (2019/PG) Thriller, with Kelly Kruger. ★★★

Letters

Edited by GREG MORGAN

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Email: expressletters@express.co.uk (include your full name, address and telephone number)

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Hypocritical politicians are a sickening shower

I AM no fan of either Nigel Farage or Reform UK, but I have to say that the level of humbug levelled at the party leader is shameful.

Politicians from both Labour and Conservative parties have recently openly welcomed the release and return of Egyptian dissident Alaa Abd El-Fattah.

Farage has been castigated for statements allegedly made around half a century ago, which even though pure hearsay, have been labelled racist by his critics, .

El-Fattah, however, has recently made racist, vehemently antisemitic and inciteful statements, and yet was being lauded by our woke and virtue-signalling leaders. What a sickening shower they are.

Brian Metcalfe,
Birmingham

Those who come here to hate shouldn't get to stay

HOW wonderful and reassuring it must be to live in a country with strong politicians who put the rights of its citizens before those who enter the country illegally, commit crimes, flout court orders and who still cannot be deported because we are told it is too complicated.

I refer to JJ Anisiobi's article about the British national, who lived in Australia for two decades and was arrested for allegedly posting swastikas online, promoting Nazi ideology and calling for violence against Jews.

There was no dithering, just decisive action by their home affairs minister Tony Burke who said unapologetically: "He came here to hate – he doesn't get to stay."

Successive governments in this country have been far too weak when protecting our citizens.

Julie Foster,
Burnley, Lancs

Australia shows UK the way to deal with outlaws

WHAT an excellent article about the efficient way Australia is dealing with the migrant who chose to not live by its laws of the country that had accepted him.

So many migrants claim they're seeking a better life when applying for citizenship, so it is totally reasonable he should be ejected for breaking the rules.

This British national has enjoyed Australian hospitality for two decades and is now to be ejected. I guess we'll have to take him back.

Meanwhile our inept PM has welcomed the imminent return of the bigot Alaa Abd El-Fattah. Shame on Labour for not taking Australia's line to protect its citizens.

Patricia East,
Guildford, Surrey

Women's jail not a soft option for trans rapist

I REFER to JJ Anisiobi's article on men who commit rape claiming they identify as women to try to get sent to a women's prison in the belief they'll have an easier time.

The first instance this came up, I was talking with a retired prison officer about it and speculating as to whether it should be allowed as the man would probably find it an enjoyable experience.

His response was that the rapist wouldn't last five minutes. Perhaps we should allow the request.

Eric Smart,
Scarborough, North Yorkshire

LETTER OF THE DAY

British-Egyptian dissident and activist Alaa Abd El-Fattah

El-Fattah and his fans are not welcome

ALAA Abd El-Fattah has said he considers Brits are "dogs and monkeys", called for more Zionists to be killed, urged violence against the police and hates white people.

So, our woefully out-of-touch Prime Minister, Keir Starmer – along with many other politicians, both Conservative and Labour who campaigned for El-Fattah's release – have welcomed him to Britain.

Indeed, the Tories granted El-Fattah British citizenship in the first place.

Thirty years of ill-informed, out-of-touch politicians have overseen the demise of our once great country, while treating Britain's indigenous population with arrogance by holding them in complete contempt.

Alan Roberts
Billericay, Essex

Starmer's reaction flawed in such dangerous times

IT'S UNBELIEVABLE that in such dangerous times Keir Starmer celebrates the return of bigot Alaa Abd El-Fattah to Britain – little wonder our security is monitoring thousands of potential killers in our community when the PM appears to endorse their arrival.

The question is where is he going to live and support himself? What's the betting a nice four-bedroom house, furnished, free TV, games console and probably a mobility car.

Syd Vaughan,
Birmingham

Spineless backbenchers should force PM to quit

IF A TOP Conservative government minister, not least the PM, had have said they were delighted that Alaa Abd El-Fattah was allowed to return to Britain after his offensive tweets, he would have demanded they resign, but what do we get?

Nothing. His backbenchers and the Labour Party should force him out on his backside, but they won't because the loony-left fringe know, as proved by the benefits cuts farce, Keir Starmer is their puppet, and they can get the weakling to do their exact bidding.

Ashley Smith,
March, Cambs

Labour's top two will be the ruin of great nation

KEIR Starmer is a little man of no consequence trying to look like a big man, but failing to make it.

He emulates other dictators by bullying innocents, but the man offers nothing to benefit the UK.

He constantly grasps at straws and his chancellor is adrift in a fiscal morass with no clear escape. If not stopped he'll bring nothing but ruin to our great country.

Geoff Fawcett,
Workington, Cumbria

Residents need to take care over value for money

ALTHOUGH residents have due cause to be concerned over recent proposals to scale back Care Quality Commission inspections of care homes, they should be far more concerned over their value for money.

UK care homes charge residents anything from £60,000 to more than £100,000 a year, yet pay their hardworking carers between £20,500 and £24,000.

Many homes are financed by US companies and private equity firms taking out up to £2billion per annum in shareholder and investor returns.

Roy Daniels,
Kingsclere, Hants

Reeves boosting growth... just not in the right areas

SOMEONE should help Rachel Reeves realise that the "growth" referenced in Labour's manifesto was supposed to refer to the economy, and not a raft of taxes, unemployment, deaths from the cold, small boat arrivals, illegal migrants claiming asylum and all the other negatives she's managed through her disastrous budgets.

And now here's another tax rise which will filter down via the airports to airlines and, ultimately, users which will cut growth not only for Brits but foreign nationals who want to come here to spend

Then "Red" Ed Miliband will cheer fewer flights and lower fuel use – though it will not be British fuel as he's already stopped new oil exploration. Well done, another foul up to push us towards bankruptcy

Barrie Warren,
Bury, Greater Manchester

BUSINESSES WILL NEVER TAKE OFF AT THIS RATE

THE government wants to expand Heathrow and Gatwick airports using the excuse it will increase trade into the country, but who will invest when rates are rising by 295%?

This extortionate hike will impact on everyone who uses an airport. Struggling families save hard for a holiday but the rises will ruin plans.

It will also hurt hospitality as fewer fliers means fewer overnight stays. It does not help that staycations are limited as many hotels house illegal migrants. Do Labour want investment or not?

Anne Jones,
Stalybridge
Greater Manchester

TODAY: Monday December 31, 2025

ON THIS DAY

THE EXPRESS
TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT
A Happy New Year to all our readers
3am drama as crazed fan stabs couple in mansion
WIFE'S HEROISM SAVES BEATLE GEORGE
TOMORROW
ON SUNDAY

26 years ago (1999)
Former Beatle George Harrison was stabbed during a break-in at his secluded mansion near Henley, Oxfordshire, by a man wielding a large knife.

In our last edition of the millennium we also revealed that actor Sean Connery, entrepreneur Richard Branson and boxer Henry Cooper had been awarded knighthoods. Meanwhile singer Shirley Bassey and actress Elizabeth Taylor became Dames in the New Year honours list.

61 years ago (1964)
Donald Campbell smashed the world water speed record, reaching an average of 276.33mph in Bluebird at Lake Dumbleyung in Perth, Western Australia.

He was the first person to break the world land and water speed records in the same year.

33 years ago (1992)
Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia at midnight in a separation dubbed the Velvet Divorce, similar to the so-called Velvet Revolution three years earlier which brought about the end of communist rule.

It was the only break-up of a former Eastern Bloc country without any bloodshed.

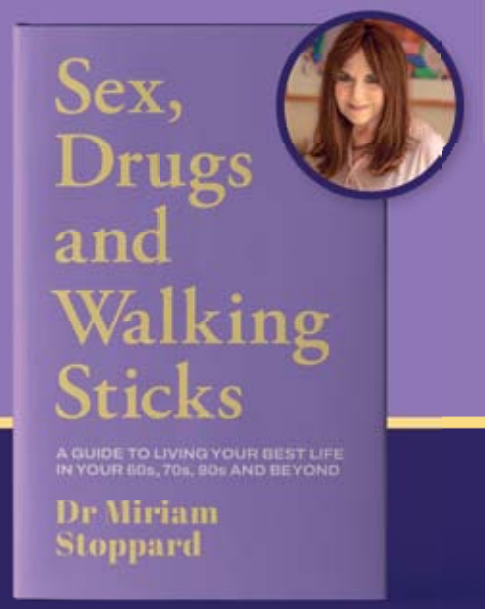
BIRTHDAYS

Actor **Sir Anthony Hopkins** is 88. His mentor was Richard Burton. Actor **Sir Ben Kingsley** is 82. He and actor Robert Powell were classmates. Actress **Bebe Neuwirth** is 67, she was Lilith Crane in Cheers and Lilith Sternin in Frasier. Former Manchester United boss **Sir Alex Ferguson** is 84.

TODAY'S GIGGLE
I bought a cheap wig this morning...
it was a small price toupee

Sex, Drugs and Walking Sticks

by Dr Miriam Stoppard



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LOOK TO THE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 20

Money-wise, it's a bit of a seesaw this year. You'll have cash coming in – but it might feel like it's sneaking straight back out through the cracks. Unexpected bills (especially health-related ones) could pop up, so do keep a little "just in case" pot at the ready.

The good news? From June onwards, things begin to balance out. That's your cue to firm up your footing – look at property, investments or maybe treat yourself to something with four wheels and a bit of polish.

Just watch out around October because you might end up footing the bill for school fees or kiddie-related costs.

Still, it's nothing you can't handle.

TAURUS APRIL 21-MAY 21

You're the money maestro this year. The first half sees you stacking the savings, eyeing up sparkly things, and possibly inheriting something that gives your bank balance a lovely boost.

It's not just luck – it's your sensible, steady approach paying off. You might splurge a little on jewellery or home comforts (because who doesn't need another cashmere throw?), but you'll still have plenty stashed away.

After June, things get even more exciting: new income streams, surprise wins, and maybe a big-ticket purchase that brings lasting joy. October onwards brings treats involving homes, cars or property – you're building wealth, and it shows.

GEMINI MAY 22-JUNE 21

It's a good year to feather your financial nest. You'll start strong with a boost to your earnings and a few savvy decisions that leave you feeling flush. A loved one (perhaps a spouse or partner) proves quite the asset – financially and otherwise.

By summer, you may be retrieving money that's been stuck or owed for ages – like a little reward from the universe. Got some jewellery or investments in mind? You're likely to get your hands on them by the middle of the year.

Later on, you may be tempted to splurge on social events or community do-gooding. That's lovely; but maybe set a cap on the bubbly budget.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 23

It's a year of ebb and flow and you'll need to be a bit of a financial crab: cautious, clever, and always near your shell of savings. The first half might feel tight, especially if investments or loans don't go as planned.

The trick? Don't lend what you can't afford to lose, and avoid get-rich-quick schemes like the plague.

By summer, the tide turns. You may get help from loved ones or see success through shared ventures. You're also due some unexpected gifts or goodies, possibly from family members.

Keep calm, carry on and don't spend it all on scented candles and soft furnishings.

LEO JULY 24-AUGUST 23

Not a bad year for your bank balance, but not quite red carpet and champagne fountains either.

You'll enjoy a steady flow of funds through the first half, but you'll also find yourself dipping into the pot for things like medical expenses or family needs.

The golden rule this year? Avoid risky investments, no matter how glossy the brochure. Stick to what you know and keep a watchful eye on any shared accounts.

The outlook brightens towards the end of the year, and just in time to plan something indulgent for yourself (but still be sensible – you are maturing, after all).

VIRGO AUGUST 24-SEPTEMBER 23

Your money mojo is strong this year. Early on, you're ticking all the right boxes: savings grow, income flows, and you might even land yourself some rather fancy bits – cars, stones, property – you name it.

Comfort is calling, and you're happy to invest in quality. After June, you could finally collect something long overdue (hello, back pay or forgotten refund).

There's potential for spending on family events too – think weddings or big celebrations.

Overall, it's a brilliant year to build, save, and maybe splash out – just a little, on that top-shelf bottle you've always had your eye on.

FUTURE WITH RUSSELL GRANT

What 2026 looks like for your wallet

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 24-OCTOBER 23

Lovely Libra, your money story this year is one of careful growth and thoughtful spending. You'll have ample chances to save, and you're being very clever about what's worth splashing out on.

Early on, you might face costs tied to loved ones – perhaps the kids or family have health needs – but it won't break the bank. You're planning like a pro.

Post-June, it's looking even better. Investments in property, jewellery or home upgrades are likely, and lucky, too. Come autumn, your income gets a quiet lift, and you end the year in a stronger, smarter place financially.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 24-NOVEMBER 22

You're back in control. The first half of the year is strong. You're managing debt, making smart purchases, and possibly even revamping your financial strategy like a boss.

There may be some lucky breaks on the real estate or vehicle front. Old loans or financial worries? Sorted. That "money pit" feeling starts to fade.

As summer arrives, you're feeling more generous – splashing out on parties, family milestones, or helping someone special. Health expenses may crop up, particularly for your mum or a maternal figure, so budget with care.

Overall, this is the year you flex those financial muscles. Bravo.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 23-DECEMBER 21

You're riding high, at least to start with. Money comes in steadily, and there's a nice mix of luck and support from your tribe.

It's a fabulous time to save, plan, and get your financial house in order.

But a small red flag flies after the halfway point. Sources of income may shrink, and some sneaky expenses could throw your budget off. So hold off on lending money or locking into long-term investments – you may not see that cash again.

If in doubt, sit tight and stash your pennies. Your adventurous side may grumble, but your future self will thank you.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 20

This year is more "budget spreadsheet" than "shopping spree". It's not disastrous; just a bit up and down.

Income might wobble due to work or business hiccups, so you'll need to be extra cautious.

Avoid lending money, saying yes to shiny but risky deals, or buying anything you don't absolutely need.

From May onwards, unplanned health expenses could nip at your savings, so don't let your pride get in the way of saying "maybe later".

It's a good year to play it safe. And remember: slow and steady is your thing. Trust it.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 21-FEBRUARY 19

You're off to a slow start this year. Unpredictable income and surprise costs might have you playing financial whack-a-mole for a bit – but don't lose heart.

After mid-May, things improve nicely. You're clearing debts, setting better boundaries with money, and starting to build a more stable flow.

It's also a time for a family celebration, so expect to do some spending linked to parties or lovely little get-togethers.

The lesson this year? Keep your head, avoid the "too good to be true" traps, and say no to lending (even to the mate who always forgets their wallet).

PISCES FEBRUARY 20-MARCH 20

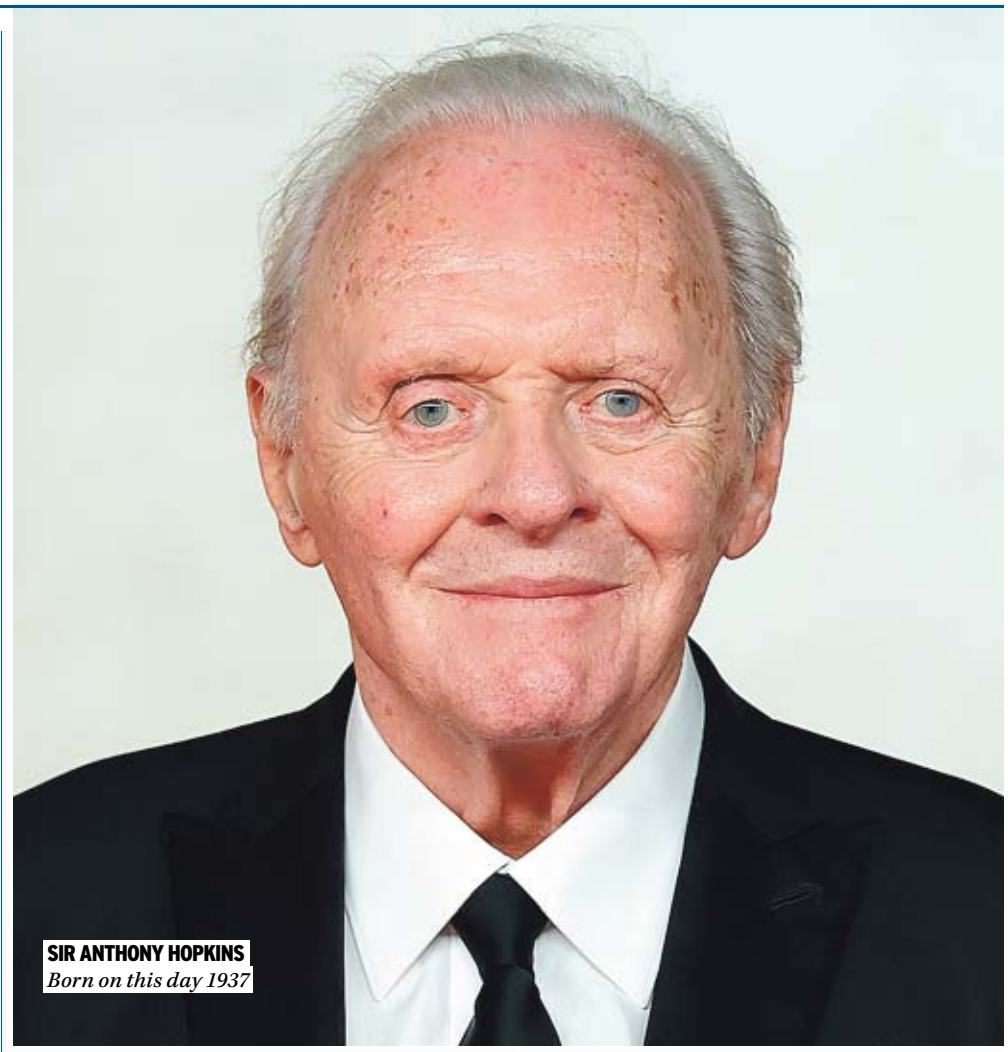
It's a steady year overall, Pisces, with a few magical moments thrown in.

You start strong, with income ticking over and maybe even a little windfall from family (especially in-laws – yes, really!).

You may find yourself spending more on spiritual or social occasions, weddings, trips, or big family events but it's joyful money, and you'll feel good about every penny spent.

Mid-year brings peace of mind, not because you've won the lottery, but because your priorities are aligned. You're buying what matters and saving what you can. And that, lovely Pisces, is wealth of the wisest kind.

RUSSELL GRANT



SIR ANTHONY HOPKINS
Born on this day 1937

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 20

Conversations with older people will give you something serious to think about. Share your hopes and dreams for 2026 with others. Their feedback and suggestions will be helpful. This last day of the year is a good time to reflect on your future and consider what actions you might take to work towards those dreams.

For more call **0905 789 4171**
(80p/min + network access charge)

TAURUS APRIL 21-MAY 21

Even with your hard-working efforts, it will start to feel as if very little progress is being made. You're finding it very hard to muster up the energy or motivation to continue with tasks that others seem perfectly happy to postpone. Why continue on alone? If you can't beat them, you may as well join them.

For more call **0905 789 4172**
(80p/min + network access charge)

GEMINI MAY 22-JUNE 21

The choices and decisions you are making now will affect and may closely involve those who are closest to you for a time to come. Even if it's not directly, your plans will have some bearing on the lives of others. That's why you should discuss these very thoroughly before making a solid commitment. Clarity is going to be important.

For more call **0905 789 4173**
(80p/min + network access charge)

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 23

A sense of harmony fills your home and your mood reflects this. You know the moment is unlikely to last for too long but you are happy to enjoy it while you can. You feel content and at peace and as if nothing can bring you down. For now, life looks brighter and hold on to these moments. Write down what you feel grateful for.

For more call **0905 789 4174**
(80p/min + network access charge)

LEO JULY 24-AUG 23

Overindulgence isn't known to be good for anyone. Too much of a good thing isn't a healthy way of living and that's something you will be waking up to today. Moving forward, you intend to avoid excess and stick to a better routine knowing your time will be better spent focusing on your career. A friend will be happy to motivate you.

For more call **0905 789 4175**
(80p/min + network access charge)

VIRGO AUG 24-SEPT 23

You will wake up this morning with some great ideas for the future. If you are serious about these plans and they include a close friend, housemate or relative, you should talk this over with them, just so they know what you are thinking. A text message or a surprise email will include some interesting and useful information.

For more call **0905 789 4176**
(80p/min + network access charge)

LIBRA SEPT 24-OCT 23

A relative will come to you seeking advice. Take some time to reflect on their words before offering up an opinion. Also, keep in mind that if they have reached out for your help, you are not overstepping boundaries and making things more confusing. Social life presents a mixed bag. Say yes to a spontaneous offer or invitation.

For more call **0905 789 4177**
(80p/min + network access charge)

SCORPIO OCT 24-NOV 22

You would never assume it would be easy to convince others to share your perspective. Someone whose support you need isn't keen on future plans. They're being awkward and wary and rather than press for a decision, you might rethink your approach. If you are to get your own way, you need to be more flexible.

For more call **0905 789 4178**
(80p/min + network access charge)

SAGITTARIUS NOV 23-DEC 21

A financial, business or career issue will be resolved when someone will open up and disclose the reasons behind their previous decisions and hasty actions. They have not made good choices and they will admit to this now. In friendships, shared interests help weave stronger connections. Start planning for a getaway in spring.

For more call **0905 789 4179**
(80p/min + network access charge)

CAPRICORN DEC 22-JAN 20

You have already prepared yourself for a full and varied agenda as the year comes to an end. Take this chance to take an imaginative approach into all the things that you do. Business and legal matters will proceed as anticipated while evening social events will provide a pleasant and welcome distraction for you and others.

For more call **0905 789 4180**
(80p/min + network access charge)

AQUARIUS JAN 21-FEB 19

Some ideas being discussed won't be worth the cost. A strangely withdrawn and private mood will be what is holding you back from joining on with social and friendship activities. You might even decide that missing out on celebrations planned for this evening would be more preferable to attending when you aren't in the right mood.

For more call **0905 789 4181**
(80p/min + network access charge)

PISCES FEB 20-MARCH 20

Could your imagination be deceiving you? You have a strong sense that something isn't quite right and you shouldn't dismiss these gut feelings and instincts. Instead, take a little time to observe what is going on and what it is that could be making you feel this way. Follow your initial thoughts when it comes to anything financial.

For more call **0905 789 4182**
(80p/min + network access charge)

Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge - maximum of 5 minutes duration. You must be over 18 and have the bill payer's permission. Service provider Spoke. Helpline 0333 202 3390

NUTWOOD TALES

To order a copy of the Rupert Annual 2024 (£10.99) visit www.expressbookshop.com or call Express Bookshop on 020 3176 3832. Free UK P&P on online orders over £25.

RUPERT AND THE COUGH DROP No.41

Then, while a scrumptious tea they eat,
A knocking brings them to their feet.

But at the door they stand and stare,
A bulging sack is lying there.

The party is going with a swing and the little pals are eating sweets and trifle when there is a knock at the front door. "Whatever can that be?" says Rupert. "Let's go and see!" They run to the door so fast that most of their caps fall off. "This is queer," says Rupert as he peers out. "The person who came has gone away again and has left a huge sack on the path. We'd better see what's in the sack."

CALVIN AND HOBBES BILL WATTERSON

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HOW LUCKY PEOPLE ARE TO KNOW SOMEONE AS GREAT AS ME! I'M GREAT IN SO MANY GREAT WAYS! IN FACT, I'M SO GREAT THAT MY GREATNESS IS...
YOU'RE NOT GREAT! YOU'RE THE MOST CONCEITED PERSON I'VE EVER MET!
WHEN YOU'RE GREAT, PEOPLE OFTEN MISTAKE CANDOUR FOR BRAGGING.
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AT A GLANCE

STOCK MARKET		
FTSE 100	9940.7 ▲	+74.2
FTSE 250	22558.4 ▲	+150.9
FTSE ALL SHARE	5356.9 ▲	+39.3
Shares Traded	7885.1 million	

POPULAR SHARES ON THE RISE		
Abrdn	207¾	+2¾
AstraZeneca	13750	+2
Aviva	686	+6
BAE Systems	1714	+15½
Barclays	476¾	+7½
BP	431	+4
BT Group	183¾	+¾
Centrica	169¾	+¾
GSK	1830½	+7½
Haleon	373½	+½
HSBC Holdings	1175½	+9½
Int Consolidated Airlines	415	+1¼
Lloyds Banking Group	98¼	+1
Marks & Spencer Group	327½	+6
National Grid	1147½	+6½
NatWest Group	653¼	+7¼
Rolls-Royce Holdings	1153	+16
Saga	395½	+3½
Sainsbury (J)	326½	+1½
Shell	2731½	+25½
Tesco	443½	+3¼
Vodafone Group	98½	+1
Whitbread	2555	+13

POPULAR SHARES ON THE SLIDE		
Convatec Group	242¼	-¾
Unilever	4856	-4

WORLD MARKETS		
WALL STREET	48,367.0 ▼	-94.8
TOKYO	50339.5 ▼	-187.4
HONG KONG	25854.6 ▲	+219.4
GERMANY	24490.4 ▲	+139.3
FRANCE	8168.1 ▲	+56.1

STERLING VALUE		
Dollar	1.347 ▼	-0.004
Yen	210.601 ▼	-0.196
Euro	1.146 ▼	-0.002

DOLLAR VALUE		
Dollar/Yen	156.328 ▲	+0.2964
Dollar/Euro	0.850 ▲	+0.0011

COMMODITIES	
GOLD($)	▲ 4369.85
KRUGERRAND(£)	▲ 3242.99
SILVER(pence)	▲ 5765.31
BRENT CRUDE($)	▼ 61.33

OTHER INDICATORS	
Base rate	3.75%
Halifax mortgage rate	5.95%
Retail Price Index	+3.8% (CPI +3.2%)
House price Index	+1.7%
Unemployment	1,832,000

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Czech Rep.	26.15 koruna
Denmark	8.13 krone
Eurozone	1.13 euro
Hong Kong	9.87 dollar
Hungary	415.85 forint
Israel	4.04 shekel
Japan	202.27 yen
Jordan	0.89 dinar
Mexico	22.97 peso
New Zealand	2.25 dollar
Norway	13.08 krone
Poland	4.61 zloty
Saudi Arabia	4.82 riyal
South Africa	21.59 rand
Sweden	11.79 krona
Switzerland	1.03 franc
Thailand	40.91 baht
Turkey	53.92 lira
United States	1.33 dollar

Nearly two-thirds fear the economy is spiralling down

By **Samuel Norman**

A MAJORITY of Britons believe the economy is getting worse – with sentiment souring significantly amid rising prices and weak growth.

Nearly six in 10 people fear there is a downward spiral, a major jump from 43% at the start of the year.

And it is a big blow to Chancellor Rachel Reeves and the government, which has claimed it has restored financial stability since it came to power.

Negativity blow to Rachel Reeves

The fresh findings from KPMG UK's latest consumer pulse survey also showed half of respondents plan to cut their discretionary spending as a result of the dampening outlook.

Linda Ellett, head of consumer, retail and leisure for KPMG UK, said: "Consumers adjusting to higher household essential outgoings and spending caution due to perception of a worsening economy is set to continue into 2026."

Consumers' negativity towards the economy comes despite the Bank of England chopping interest rates by 1% over the course of the year in four separate cuts. Around 15% of respondents to KPMG's survey blamed their attitudes towards the economy on interest rates not falling as much as expected.

But the most significant contribution to souring sentiment was the cost of groceries (81%) and household utilities (75%).

Inflation has remained sticky, despite a surprise drop in December to 3.2%

But this remains well above the Bank of England target of 2%.

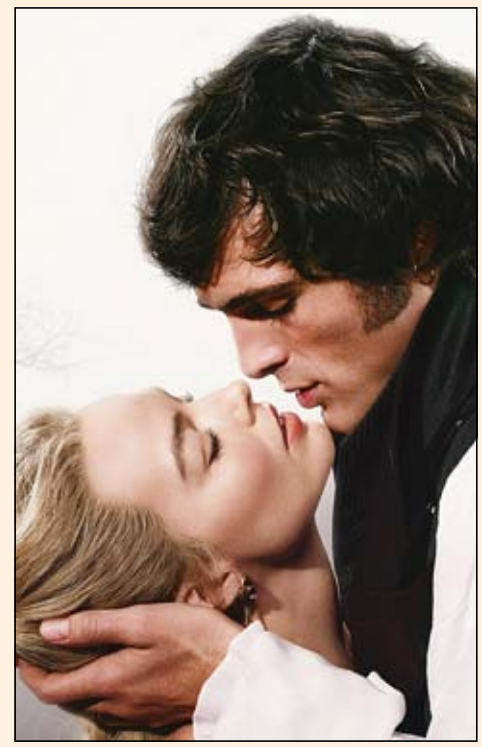
Ahead of Ms Reeves's second autumn Budget, the UK's largest supermarkets wrote to the Chancellor calling for the Treasury to bring "inflation to a heel".

Bosses from the likes of Tesco, Lidl and Morrisons warned: "Given the costs falling on the industry, including from the last Budget, high food inflation is likely to persist into 2026."

Economists have pencilled in more subdued growth for the years ahead.

Alex Kerr, UK economist at Capital Economics, said with the economy slowing "significantly" in the second half of 2025, "we doubt 2026 will be much better".

WARNER BROS TUG OF LOVE HITS SHARES



Robbie and Elordi star in Wuthering Heights

WARNER Bros Discovery has been trading lower ahead of the January 21 offer deadline as investors weigh the chances of a deal amid competing bids from Netflix and Paramount Skydance.

Shares in the company behind upcoming film Wuthering Heights, with Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi, slipped 0.04% to $28.79 (£21.30) on Monday, trading around 4% below Paramount's $30 cash offer.

Netflix is the board-backed preference, with an offer of $23.25 in cash and some $4.50 in Netflix stock per WBD share, according to WBD. This would value the streaming giant at $27.75.

Any deal consolidating Warner Bros's vast media portfolio faces antitrust review here and in the US.

Heating was off in 2025

Firm at a loss thanks to hottest spring since 1885

OCTOPUS Energy Group has swung to a hefty annual loss as it revealed a hit of more than £100million from lower energy demand due to warmer weather.

The firm, which runs Britain's biggest gas and electricity supplier with 7.6 million customers, reported a £260.1m pre-tax loss for the year to April 30 against profits of £77.6m the previous year. It blamed the UK's hottest spring on record since 1885 – gas use slumped by 11% in March and 25% in April.

Earnings were also impacted by the end of the energy crisis allowance payments and the final one-off costs of its rescue takeover of Bulb. Octopus said it added another 800,000 UK energy customers from switching and now has a market share of 24%.

Greg Jackson, founder of Octopus, said: "We're able to continue investing in innovation and scale in other markets, whilst relentlessly focusing on customer service and value."

++ THE FTSE 100 THE FTSE 100 THE FTSE 100 ++

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
3i Group	3244#	+14	4459	2999
A.B. Foods	2142#	+21	2337	1841½
Admiral Group	†			
Airtel Africa	355½	+11¼	359	113½
Alliance Trust	1278#	+2	1324	1050
Anglo American	3056	+71	3093¾	2003¾
Antofagasta	3316	+105	3316	1383
Ashtead Group	5142	-4	5538	3659
AstraZeneca	13750	+2	14148	9667
Auto Trader	587¼	+2½	908½	584
Aviva	686	+6	692½	465½
Babcock International	1242#	+25	1330	485¾
BAE Systems	1714	+15½	2060	1145
Barclays	476¾	+7½	477½	241¾
Barratt Development	381½	+7¼	482¼	350
Beazley Group	844	+6½	973	769
Berkeley Grp Hldgs	3924	+24	4324	3462
BP	431	+4	476¼	331¾
British Amer.Tob	4195#	+25	4421	2875
British Land	401½#	+2½	420½	321¼
BT Group	183¾#	+¾	222¾	138¼
Bunzl	2088#	+16	3452	2066
Burberry Group	1278	+19	1371½	627¾
Centrica	169¾	+¾	180	132¼
Coca-Cola HBC	3854	+32	4034	2708
Compass Group	2370	+7	2843	2319
Convatec Group	242¼	-¾	295½	219¼
CRH	9370	-64	9512	6142
Croda International	2756	-6	3385	2465
DCC	4672	-18	5600	4528
Diageo	1602½	+13	2555	1579
Diploma	5355	+45	5650	3624
EasyJet	510½	+4¾	587¾	427½
Entain	765½	+7¾	1022	501¼
Experian Group	3409	-22	4088	3091
F&C Inv Tst	1252	+11	1253	962
Flutter Entert.	16155	+80	23630	14670
Fresnillo	3412	+218	3412	616

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Games Workshop	18920#	-10	19840	12410
GlaxoSmithKline	1830½#	+7½	1835½	1264
Glencore	406½	+10	408½	230
Haleon	373½	+½	415¼	326½
Halma	3544#	+24	3658	2360
Hikma	1550	+14	2340	1507
Hiscox	1429	+11	1431	1035
HSBC Holdings	1175½	+9½	1181¼	713¼
IMI	2498	+16	2524	1606
Imperial Brands	3130#	+22	3312	2551
Informa	888¼	+6	993½	640¼
InterContinental Htl	10440	+75	10880	7424
Intermediate Cap.Grp	2072#	+20	2450	1569
Intertek Group	4630	-26	5385	4064
Intl Consolidated Airlines	415	+1¼	427½	224½
JD Sports	85¼	+1½	104½	63¼
Kingfisher	314¾	+2½	317	228¼
Land Securities	624½#	+4½	650	499½
Legal & General	262	+3	263	215¼
Lloyds Banking Grp	98¼	+1	98½	53
London & Stamford Prop.	189½#	+1¼	204½	170½
London Stock Ex	8962	+70	12095	8138

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
M&G	288	+2¾	288½	172¾
Marks & Spencer	327½#	+6	411¼	318½
Melrose	586½	+8¼	680	386
Mondi	909¾	+5½	1326	819
National Grid	1147½#	+6½	1182	910¾
NatWest Group	653¼	+7¼	654¼	374½
Next	13650#	+140	14580	9028
Pearson	1050½	+5½	1379	984½
Pershing Square Hold	4794	-28	5090	3244
Persimmon	1357½	+16	1405	1037½
Phoenix Group	737½	+7	737½	479½
Prudential	1152½	+7½	1155½	595¼
Reckitt Benckiser	6012	+14	6080	4633
RELX	3047	-2	4135	2972
Rentokil Initial	445¾	+3	448½	309½
Rightmove	517¼	+1¾	823¾	511½
Rio Tinto	6026	+76	6047	4117
Rolls-Royce Group	1153	+16	1190	563½
Sage Group	1083½	+3½	1348	1063
Sainsbury (J)	326½	+1½	355¾	228¾
Schroders	411	+4¾	428¼	289¼
Scottish Mortgage	1183½	+8	1187	815¼
SEGRO	719½	+5½	732¼	599
Severn Trent	2807#	+33	2852	2338
Shell	2731½	+25½	2931½	2291½
Smith & Nephew	1234	+6	1435	937¾
Smiths Group	2374	+8	2550	1687
Smurfit Kappa	2881	+31	4495	2558
Spirax-Sarco	6860	+45	8190	5445
SSE	2195#	+24	2307	1463½
St James's Place	1391	+11½	1399	791
Standard Chartered	1826	+21	1835	878¾
Tesco	443½	+3¼	475½	314½
Unilever	4856	-4	6177½	4793½
United Utilities	1203#	+15	1237	937½
Vodafone Group	98½#	+1	99	64
Weir Group	2844	+6	2990	1984
Whitbread	2555	+13	3274	2335s

Ocado shares slip amid global push

SHARES in Ocado slipped 2% yesterday as the online grocery group outlined plans to sell its AI-driven warehouse tech globally as its exclusivity deals expire.

Shares traded near 220p in early deals as investors weighed the potential of Ocado's global tech push against lessons learned from a setback with US retail giant Kroger.

Kroger scrapped three automated warehouses and axed plans for a fourth, though Ocado will receive £259million in compensation.

Domestically, the company is expanding capacity, targeting a new fulfilment centre near Manchester to meet rising demand.

Ocado Retail, a joint venture with Marks & Spencer, now delivers to around 82% of the population and reported a 15.8% sales increase in the 12 weeks to November.

+ BG + Barclays + BT + Centrica + Dixons Carphone + First Group + HSBC + Kingfisher + Marks & Spencer + Next + Prudential + Rolls-Royce + Sainsburys + Tesco + Unilever + Vodafone + Whitbread + WPP

SHARES AT A GLANCE

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	LOW
Aerospace & Defence				
Avon Rubber	1826	+14	2180	1338
Babcock International	1242#	+25	1330	485¾
BAE Systems	1714	+15½	2060	1145
Chemring Group	472½	+4	593	297½
QinetiQ Group	444½	+6½	572	361
Rolls-Royce Group	1153	+16	1190	563½
Senior	193¾	+1½	202	115¾
Alternative Energy				
Porvair	832	+6	856	626
Banks				
Barclays	476¾	+7½	477½	241¾
Bco Santander	893	+23	893	362
Close Brothers	526½	+6½	550½	208
HSBC Holdings	1175½	+9½	1181¼	713¼
Investec	561½#	+11	596	414
Lloyds Banking Grp	98¼	+1	98½	53
Metro Bank	121½	+1¾	133½	81
NatWest Group	653¼	+7¼	654¼	374½
Paragon Group	864½	+7	970	686½
Standard Chartered	1826	+21	1835	878¾
Beverages				
Barr (AG)	631	+1	711	558
Coca-Cola HBC	3854	+32	4034	2708
Diageo	1602½	+13	2555	1579
Chemicals				
Carclo	51½	-1¾	80	21
Croda International	2756	-6	3385	2465
Elementis	167	-½	176½	115
Johnson Matthey	2174#	+16	2196	1156
Synthomer	64½	+1	161	46
Treatt	204	-3½	487	186½
Victrex	662		1076	589
Construction & Materials				
Balfour Beatty	715	+4	721½	390½
Costain Group	159¼	+¾	168	86
CRH	9370	-64	9512	6142
Dialight	344	+4	348	89
Galliford Try	521	+4	539	321
Gleeson (MJ)	425	+8	538	320
Keller Group	1670	+18	1690	1240
Kier Group	222½	+½	231½	115¼
Marshalls	181½	-¼	294½	162
Morgan Sindall	4665	+15	4975	2945
Severfield-Rowen	28		52¼	19
Smart (J) & Co	132½#		132½	110
Electricity				
Drax Group	841	+6	842	536½
SSE	2195#	+24	2307	1463½
Telecom Plus	1368	+10	2085	1346
Electronic & Electrical Equipment				
Acal	604#	+1	738	486
Halma	3544#	+24	3658	2360
Oxford Instruments	2075#		2165	1500
Renishaw	3515	+30	3725	2145
TT Electronics	113¾	+1	154	73
XP Power	900	-5	1348	621
Equity Investment Instruments				
Aberdeen Asian Sml	368		380	256
Aberforth Smll.Co.	1578	+6	1588	1212
Acorn Income				
Albion Tech.& Gen. VCT	66		71	65½
Alliance Trust	1278#	+2	1324	1050
Aurora Inv.Tst.	272		272½	212½
AVI Global Tst	257#	+1	266½	202
Baillie Gifford Japan	896		951	657
Baillie Gifford Shin Nip	131	+2½	136½	95½
Bankers Inv.Tst	133¼	+½	135	101
Baronsmead VCT.2	48½		52	46½
BH Macro GBP	400	+4	414	371½
Biotech Growth Trust	1220	-5	1285	620
BlackRock Mining	825	-4	855	406½
Bluehone AiM VCT2	28¼#		31	28¼
British Assets Tst	26¾		49¼	26¼
Brunner Inv.Tst.	1434	+4	1470	1140
Caledonia Inv.	379#	-1	391½	334½
City Natural Res.Yld	355	-2	360	165¾
City Of London	529		532	411½
Dunedin Ent.IT.				
Dunedin Income	304	+2	309	262
Edin Wwide Inv	215	+½	221	143
Edin.Inv.Tst.	822	+4	839	680
Edin.US Tracker	365½#	-2½	372	289½
Elderstreet VCT	38¾		41	36¾
F&C Cap&Inc.	346#	+6½	346	287
F&C Inv Tst	1252	+11	1253	962
F&C Smaller Cos	176½#	+¼	178	136½
F&C US Smaller Companies	1400	+10	1522½	1115
Fidelity Asian	592	-2	628	454
Fidelity European	417½	+2½	431	338½
Fidelity Special	418#	+2½	418	295½
Finsbury Gwth&In	825	+3	962	795
Foresight Tech.VCT	65½		75½	62
Genesis E.M.F.	1054		1066	632
Graphite Ent	1500	+4	1600	1070
Hansa Tst 'A'	266		272	190
Hansa Tst Plc	272		278	192½
Henderson Far Est	240½	+½	253½	190½
Henderson High Inc	190#	-½	190½	151
Herald Inv.Tst.	2410	+10	2560	1738
HGCapital Tst.	508	+1	539	448
HSBC Infrastructure	116¾#	+1¼	125¼	106
Impax Env.Mkt	396½		416½	310½
Int.Biotech.Tst.	960#	-12	996	480
International Public	125	-¼	127¾	107¾
Invesco Asia	425#		436	300
Invesco Perp UK	369		390	313½
JPM American	1122	+6	1186	869
JPM Asian	443	-½	459½	331½
JPM Claverhouse	870	+8	872	660
JPM Emerg Mkt	137½	+1½	139	95
JPM Euro Sml Co.	599#	+6	599	443
JPM Global Emerging	169½#	+1½	170	118½
JPM Indian	1020		1106	904
JPM Japanese	689#	-3	747	493
JPM Overseas IT	574#	+2	610	480
JPM Smaller Co	321½#	+1½	338	253
JPM US Sml Co.	399	-4	516	338
Jupiter Euro.	905	+7	959	757
JZ Capital Partners	187	-1	220	184
Law Debenture	1060#	+10	1070	788
Lowland Invest Co	159½#		160½	114½
Majedie Inv.	268	-3	280	230
Manchester&Lon.	799	+1	944	512
Martin Currie Prtflo Tst.	354	+2	386	295
Maven Income And Growth VCT 3	3½#		38	33½
Mercantile Inv Tst	258½#	+2½	258½	202½
Merchants Tst	599	+1	601	474
Mid Wynd Int.	770		836	664
Monks Inv.Tst.	1500	+10	1548	1036
Montanaro Euro Tst.	166#	+1½	183½	138
Montanaro Uk	101¾	+¾	106½	87¾
Murray Inc.Tst.	920	+6	938	754
Murray Int.Tst	335	+½	335½	239
New India	774		832	686
New Star Inv.Tst.	124		126¼	100
North Atl.Smlr.Tst				
Northern 2 VCT	53½#		57	52½
Northern Venture	56½#		58½	55½
Oxford Tech 2 VCT	6		7	5½
Pacific Assets.	361	-1	378	302
Pacific Horizon	774	+5	792	507
Pantheon Int.	377½	+1½	381	266
Pershing Square Hold	4794	-28	5090	3244
Polar Cap.Tech	463½	+2½	481	255½
RCM Technology Trust	528	+4	548	307
RIT Capital Partners	2275	+35	2275	1722
Ruffer Investment.	292	-2½	304	264
Schroder Asia	656#	+3	678	461½
Schroder Inc.	348#	+1	354	255
Schroder Japan	314	+1	314	209
Schroder UK	205		209	158½
Schroder UK M&S	708	+4	716	520
Scottish American	511	+2	525	454½
Scottish Mortgage	1183½	+8	1187	815¼
Shires Inc.	312	-1½	316	222
Small Comp Div.Tst	139½#		161	124
Standard Life Equity	400#	+1	404	288½
Standard Life UK Sml	505	+2	531	426
Temple Bar.	380#	+3½	380	258
Templeton Emrg.	234½#	+1½	240½	151¾
The European Inv.Tst	108½	+1½	109	84
Throgmorton Tst.	624	+5	626	469
TR Euro.Growth	216	+3	221	163
TR Prop. IT	318½#	+1	338½	277½
Witan Pacific	306	+2	322	214
Wwide Healthcare	377#		397	265½
Financial Services				
3i Group	3244#	+14	4459	2999
3i Infrastructure	375#	+1½	376½	301
Abrdn	207¾	+2¾	210¼	123¾
Ashmore Group	176½	+1¾	193	125
Guinness Peat Group	84½	+1¾	96	68¼
IG Group	1314	+7	1323	913
Intermediate Cap.Grp.	2072#	+20	2450	1569
International Pers Fin	234	+1	235	121½
IP Group	58½	-½	65	34¾
Jupiter Fund Man.	158½	+1¼	159½	68
Liontrust Asset Man	265#	-3½	476	248
London Stock Ex.	8962	+70	12095	8138
M&G	288	+2¾	288½	172¾
Man Group	229¼	+2½	229½	154¾
Provident Financial	1191¼	+1	1285½	44½
Rathbone Brothers	1940	+18	1954	1406
S & U	2070	-30	2180	1330
Schroders	411	+4¾	428¼	289¼
St James's Place	1391	+11½	1399	791
Tullett Prebon.	259½	+2½	311½	228
Walker Crips Group	13¼		17	7½
Fixed Line Telecommunications				
Airtel Africa	355½	+11¼	359	113½
BT Group	183¾#	+¾	222¾	138¼
Food & Drug Retailers				
Greggs	1686	+9	2832	1418
Kingfisher	314¾	+2½	317	228¼
Next	13650#	+140	14580	9028
Pets At Home	198¾#	-1½	273¼	192¾
RM Group	114	-1	118	82
Topps Tiles	41#		50	29
WH Smith	643½	-1½	1307	613½
Health Care Equipment & Services				
Convatec Group	242¼	-¾	295½	219¼
Flying Brands	+¾		2	+½
Smith & Nephew	1234	+6	1435	937¾
Household Goods & Home Construction				
Barratt Development	381½	+7¼	482¼	350
Bellway	2728#	+28	2982	2166
Berkeley Grp Hldgs	3924	+24	4324	3462
Bovis Homes	638	+8½	698	510¾
Mcbride	144	+4¼	159	99¼
Persimmon	1357½	+16	1405	1037½
Reckitt Benckiser	6012	+14	6080	4633
Taylor Wimpey	106¾	+2	123¼	93
Industrial Engineering				
Bodycote	704	+6½	714	460½
Hill & Smith	2160#	-10	2265	1530
IMI	2498	+16	2524	1606
Morgan Crucible	219½	+2	274	177½
Northgate	382#	+1½	395	273½
Rotork	328	+1	352	275¾
Spirax-Sarco	6860	+45	8190	5445
Vesuvius	398½	+1¾	423	313¾
Weir Group	2844	+6	2990	1984
Xaar	102	+4	145	59
Industrial Metals & Mining				
Castings	276#	+½	319	234
Evraz				
Ferrexpo	76¼	+¼	110¾	44¼
Industrial Transportation				
Braemar Shipping Serv	216#	-4½	278	201
Clarkson	3825	+40	4505	2995
FirstGroup	192#	+1	233	146½
Fisher (J) & Sons	375		403	285
Leisure Goods				
Games Workshop	18920#	-10	19840	12410
Photo-Me Intl.	151½	-¼	230	149
Life Insurance				
Aviva	686	+6	692½	465½
Chesnara	299		301¼	212¾
Legal & General	262	+3	263	215¼
Phoenix Group	737½	+7	737½	479½
Prudential	1152½	+7½	1155½	595¼
Media				
4imprint Group	3865	-25	6030	3035
Bloomsbury Publish.	486	+½	674	468
Future	526	-2	1029	520
Informa	888¼	+6	993½	640¼
ITV	82½	+1¼	87¾	66¼
Pearson	1050½	+5½	1379	984½
Reach	54	-1	88¼	53
STV Group	106	-4	220½	103
Wilmington Group.	295		390	289½
WPP Group	340¾	+7¾	830½	269
Mining				
Anglo American	3056	+71	3093¾	2003¾
Anglo Pacific	115	+1½	116	50
Antofagasta	3316	+105	3316	1383
BHP Billiton	2276	+29	2297	1609½
Endeavour Mining	3902	+84	3986	1392
Fresnillo	3412	+218	3412	616
Gem Diamonds	3		12	2¾
Glencore	406½	+10	408½	230
Hochschild Mining	530	+33	530	168
Kenmare Res.	257½	+27	436	227
Petra Diamonds	17¼	-½	30½	10½
Rio Tinto	6026	+76	6047	4117
Mobile Telecommunications				
Vodafone Group	98½#	+1	99	64
Nonequity Investment Instruments				
Oryx Int.Gwth.	1250	+5	1392½	1042½
Rights &Iss.Inc	2042½	+5	2420	1670
Nonlife Insurance				
Admiral Group				
Beazley Group	844	+6½	973	769
Hiscox	1429	+11	1431	1035
Lancashire	642	+7	694	523
Oil & Gas Producers				
BP	431	+4	476¼	331¾
Cairn Energy	190	+7	331½	183
Enquest	10½	+¼	16½	9¾
Gulf Keystone Pet.	176¼	+2¾	224½	142½
Harbour Energy	198¼	+1	294	151¼
Shell	2731½	+25½	2931½	2291½
Soco International	20#	+1	27½	18
Tullow Oil	6¼		24½	4
Oil Equipment, Services & Distribution				
Hunting	366½	+3½	396	246½
John Wood Group	23½		72½	17¼
Personal Goods				
Burberry Group	1278	+19	1371½	627¾
PZ Cussons	73¼	+2¼	88¼	66
Unilever	4856	-4	6177½	4793½
Pharmaceuticals & Biotechnology				
AstraZeneca	13750	+2	14148	9667
Genus	2615	+25	2715	1424
GlaxoSmithKline	1830½#	+7½	1835½	1264
Haleon	373½	+½	415¼	326½
Hikma	1550	+14	2340	1507
Ovoca Gold	1¼			
Oxford Biomedica	620	+3	682	232½
Real Estate Investment & Services				
Boot (Henry)	226	+1	237	196
Cardiff Property	2700		2700	2450
CLS Holdings	60		80½	53½
Foxtons	58¾	+1	69	52¼
Harworth Group	167½	+1	189½	158½
Mountview Est.	8850	-75	10200	8600
Panther Secs.	290		325	280
Rightmove	517¼	+1¾	823¾	511½
Savills	1002	-2	1110	871
Wynnstay Props.	870		888	680
Real Estate Investment Trusts				
Big Yellow Group	1050	+12	1180	848
British Land	401½#	+2½	420½	321¼
Capital & Counties	144½	+½	161¼	113½
Derwent London	1730	+15	2096	1608
Grainger	182¼	+½	228	177½
Great Portland Est.	316½#	-½	363	262
Hammerson	327½	+1½	330	220½
Helical Bar	187¾#	-2	240	171¾
Land Securities	624½#	+4½	650	499½
London & Stamford Prop	189½#	+1¼	204½	170½
Primary Health	98	+¼	103½	86¼
SEGRO	719½	+5½	732¼	599
Town Centre	127#	-4	149	117
Unite Group	561½	+7½	879½	510
Value & Income	201½#	-5½	215	173
Workspace Group	399	+5	495	362
Software & Computer Services				
Computacenter	2974	+42	3064	2024
Intec Telecom				
Microgen	293	+4	344	255
Moneysupermarket	185½	+1¼	221½	180½
Pendragon	354½	-2	558	296
RELX	3047	-2	4135	2972
Sage Group	1083½	+3½	1348	1063
Triad Group	260#		400	240
Support Services				
Ashtead Group	5142	-4	5538	3659
Capita Group	403½	+2½	405	175
DCC	4672	-18	5600	4528
Diploma	5355	+45	5650	3624
Essentra	96½	-½	133	89¾
Experian Group	3409	-22	4088	3091
Ferguson	16720	-110	19470	11670
Hays	56	+¼	88¼	52
Intertek Group	4630	-26	5385	4064
Johnson Service	134¾	-1½	159½	122¾
London Security	2750		3800	2750
Macfarlane Group	72	+2	120½	62¾
Mears Group	359	-4	417½	311½
Michael Page	236¼	+3¼	343½	219½
Mitie Group	168½	+1	169¼	106½
Norish	18½		18¾	14
Paypoint	477	+4½	853	438½
Rentokil Initial	445¾	+3	448½	309½
Robert Walters	141	+3	333	116
RS Group	628½#	+3	684	487¼
Serco Group	279½	+3	279½	147
SIG	10	-¼	18	8½
Smiths News	75½	-½	76	47½
Speedy Hire	25#		32¼	18
SThree	188¾	-¾	296	137½
Travis Perkins	641	+6½	729	494
Trifast	70½		87½	59
Vitec Group	12½	-1¼	149	11¼
Technology Hardware & Equipment				
BATM Advanced	16½		19¾	13
Tobacco				
British Amer.Tob	4195#	+25	4421	2875
Imperial Brands	3130#	+22	3312	2551
Travel & Leisure				
888 Holdings	22		74	21
Carnival	2291	+56	2358	1134
Celtic	193		198	142½
Compass Group	2370	+7	2843	2319
Domino's Pizza	173	+1¼	315	167¼
EasyJet	510½	+4¾	587¾	427½
Entain	765½	+7¾	1022	501¼
Flutter Entert.	16155	+80	23630	14670
Fuller Smith & Turner	724#	+4	728	508
Heavitree	220		280	200
InterContinental Htl	10440	+75	10880	7424
Intl Consolidated Airlines	415	+1¼	427½	224½
Irish Continental Uts	560	+17½	560	380
Marston's	58½	-½	62¼	33¼
Mitchells & Butlers	264½	+1	291½	208½
National Express	23¼	+¼	80½	21
Rank Group	100	+¼	160½	77¾
Saga	395½	+3½	400	111½
Wetherspoon (JD)	733	+3	804	541
Whitbread	2555	+13	3274	2335
AIM				
Alumasc Group	247½	+7½	395	232
Arbuthnot Banking	890		1100	837½
Boohoo	22½	+2¼	33¾	10½
Camellia	5005	-45	6050	4090
Churchill China	340		725	335
CML Microsystems.	300		335	210
Colefax Group	950		969	750
CPP Group	72½	-1¾	162	68½
Cropper (James)	325		345	132½
Falkland Islands	240		316¾	162½
Fevertree Drinks	814	+2	998	611½
Filtronic	170½	+3½	175	74¾
James Halstead	138½	+½	181½	133
Mothercare	2½		4¼	2¼
Mpac Group	305		586	270
Naked Wine	73	+1¼	93½	43
Nichols	956	-2	1465	930
Northamber	32½		34	26
Portmeirion	94	-3½	189	93
Regal Petroleum	17½		26½	14½
Rockhopper Exploratn	71¼	+2¼	87¾	25
Ten Alps	47½	-1	73	46¼
Titon Holdings	92½		95	69
Volex	414#		428½	198¾
Young & Co Brewery A.	749	+3	992	714

The service is provided for general information only and is not intended to address individual requirements. Appropriate independent advice should be obtained before making investment decisions. Reasonable care will be taken in ensuring the accuracy of the information provided but it may include errors, omissions or inaccuracies.

Ex-dividend * Ex-rights a Ex-All c Ex-capitalisation † Shares suspended

Webfinancial Group

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The oven comes with an air fryer basket, baking pan, and oven rack, allowing you to cook multiple foods at once or switch between cooking styles with ease. The combined touch and rotary controls provide simple, accurate operation, while the compact footprint fits neatly on any countertop.

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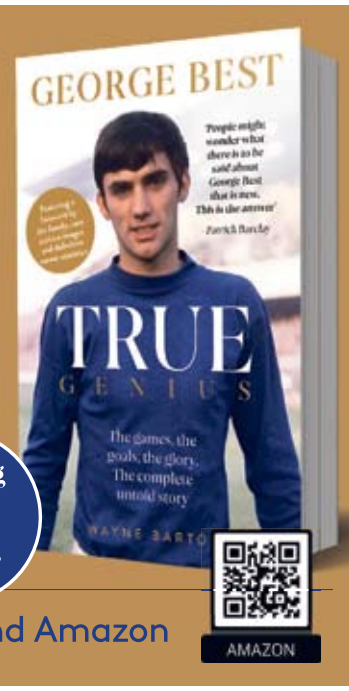

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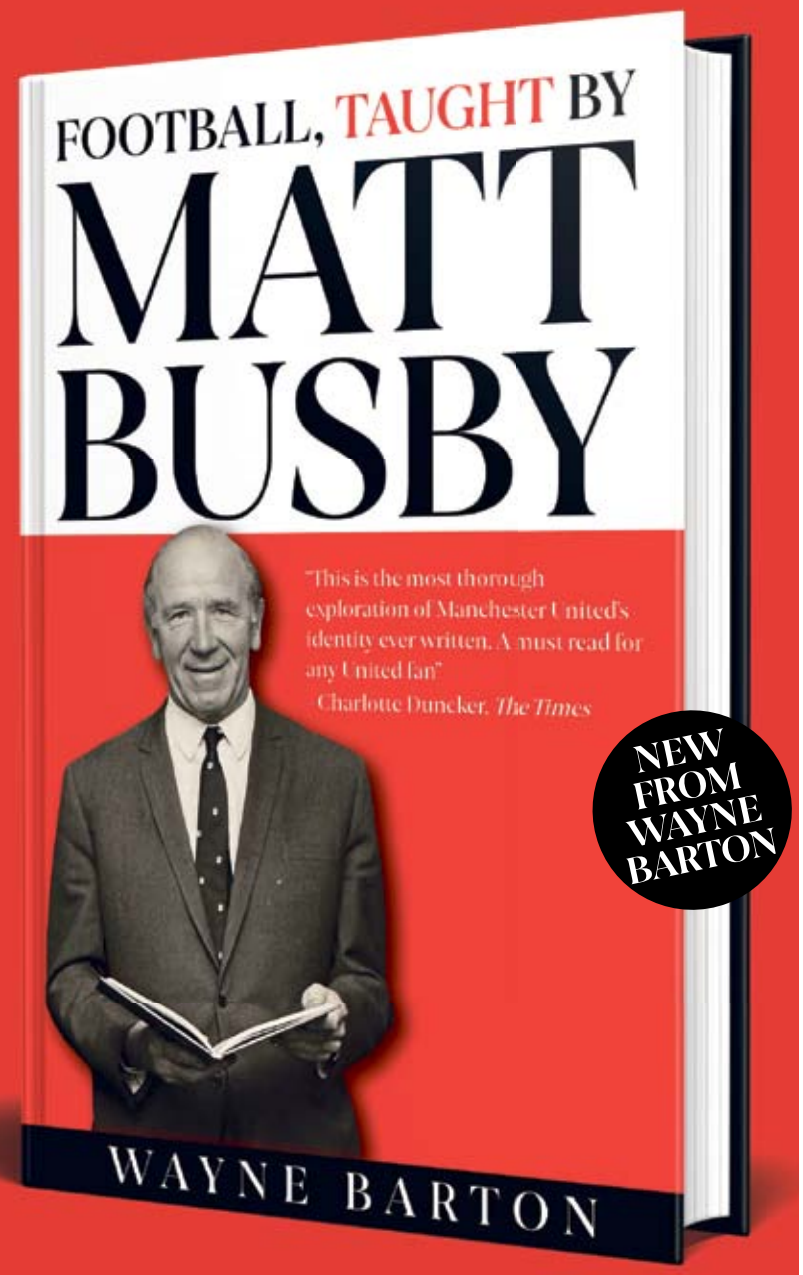
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HENDO PLANS TEAM

Festival routes taking shape for handler's stable stars

By **Jon Lees**

NICKY HENDERSON yesterday said he was 'starting to know where our ducks are lining up' as he outlined likely routes to the Cheltenham Festival for his main stars.

During a successful Christmas period Lulamba, Impose Toi, Sir Gino and Jango Baie each confirmed their status as major candidates for championship races.

Lulamba is Arkle Trophy-bound, Impose Toi heads for the Stayers' Hurdle, Sir Gino the Champion Hurdle while close-up King George fourth Jango Baie inked his name into the Cheltenham Gold Cup.

"None of them have to run again and for Jango Baie it could be the Cotswold Chase or maybe the Denman Chase," Henderson, above, said.

"The Gold Cup is our intention with Jango Baie and we know our intention with Sir Gino – we know roughly where they are going.

"The Stayers' Hurdle is also interesting from Impose Toi's point of view.

"Does he need to run again? He's so lazy at home you would say 'yeah, he could do' and there is only really one race for him (the Cleeve). But we've a lot of options.

"I think we're starting to know where our ducks are lining up and I always say by January 1 you should know what your squad for Cheltenham is beginning to look like and you have to say 'OK, it looks quite solid'."

Impressive Henry VIII Novices' Chase scorer Lulamba is one horse guaranteed another start with Warwick's Kingmaker Novices' Chase on February 7 the trainer's first preference. Henderson said: "Lulamba could run tomorrow he's that fresh.

"He does need to run again and it will be Warwick or Newbury, but the Kingmaker looks the obvious one for him."

He added: "Jonbon will go to the Clarence House. JP (McManus, owner) is very keen and he's in great form."

READY: Lulamba runs at Warwick prior to an Arkle Trophy bid

New Year watering first at Cheltenham

By **Jon Lees**

A DRY period at Cheltenham has forced clerk of the course Jon Pullin to take the unprecedented step of watering the course ahead of tomorrow's New Year's Day fixture.

Groundstaff irrigated parts of the New Course on Monday following a ten-day near dry spell during which just 1.5mm of rain fell at the track.

Temperatures are due to dip below freezing ahead of the fixture but the course is expected to withstand the forecast, with key areas under cover.

"We did some selective watering on Monday and have put frost covers down on take-offs, landings and vulnerable areas because we've got a frost forecast tonight," Pullin, above, said yesterday.

"The night going into New Year's Day isn't as cold.

"We see positive air temperatures from first thing Thursday, so based on that forecast we don't envisage any problems.

"In my time here it's the first time we have watered for January."

Meanwhile today's two jumps fixtures at Uttoxeter and Warwick both face 8am inspections in the event of temperatures dropping to as low as -2C.

The BHA has sanctioned an additional Flat fixture at Southwell on Sunday to ensure there is no blank raceday if the jumps cards at Chepstow and Plumpton succumb to the elements.

LINGFIELD SKYSPORTSRACING

12.00 NOVICE STAKES (GBB RACE) 2YO
£3,402 (Class 5) 7f 1yds (10 declared)

1	(4)	L9	HOVE RANGER (28) G & J Moore 9-7	R Clutterbuck	47
2	(7)	3252	MARSEILLAN (13) (F) Lemos Souza 9-7	G Wood	★76
3	(8)	047	TEN CUIDADO (16) M Usher 9-7	T Heard	66
4	(3)	L72	WIND SUMMER (14) I Mohammed 9-7	P Cosgrave	70
5	(2)	3	● ETERNITY'S SUNRISE (37) D Cunha 9-5	Jason Watson	71
6	(5)	L8	HIGH BOLTAGE (28) R Teal 9-5	C Fallon	55
7	(9)	9	SAVVI ROW (28) B Millman 9-5	L Edmunds	38
8	(1)	6	LA KOSMOS (21) A King 9-2	C Bishop	51
9	(10)	00	POETIC GRACE (41) C Allen 9-0	D Keenan	51
10	(6)	59	SWEEP IN TIME (28) Tom Clover 9-0	J Mitchell	75

BLINKERS: No. 2 TONGUE STRAP: No. 2 CHEEK PIECES: No. 4
HOOD: No. 10.

SP FORECAST: 7-4 Marseillan, 2 Eternity's Sunrise, 9-2 Wind Summer, 6 Sweep In Time, 14 Poetic Grace, 20 Ten Cuidado, 33 La Kosmos, 50 Savvi Row, 66 Others.
2024: Master Technician 9-11, Lewis Edmunds 4-7 Fav (B Millman), drawn (7), 9 ran.

12.30 EBF NOVICE STAKES (GBB RACE) 2YO
£3,402 (5) 6f 1yds (7)

1	(5)	4	● ALPINE CULTURE (19) James Owen 9-7	P Cosgrave	66
2	(6)		GREY FORCE (T) C Johnston 9-7	C Shepherd	–
3	(2)	5	WILD ACT (19) C Appleby 9-7	B Loughnane	56
4	(1)		ANABA GIRL J & S Best 9-2	T Heard	–
5	(4)	85	CRYINGINTHERAIN (14) (F) Ollie Sangster 9-2	H Crouch	67
6	(7)	7632	HEN PARTY (16) (F) E Dunlop 9-2	O Murphy	★81
7	(3)	9	NO DRAMA MAMA (12) Ollie Sangster 9-2	N Currie	61

HOOD: Nos. 3, 7.

SP FORECAST: 13-8 Hen Party, 3 Cryingintherain, 4 Wild Act, 7 Grey Force, 10 Alpine Culture, 16 No Drama Mama, 25 Anaba Girl.
2024: No corresponding race.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Standard. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2020-25):** Luke Morris 10% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2020-25):** G & J Moore 15% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.00 Guernsey Lady (visor), 2.00 Military Academy (visor), 12.00 Wind Summer (cheek pieces), Sweep In Time (hood), 12.30 No Drama Mama (hood). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 1.00 Alasrae. 1.30 Almaty Star(hcp), Fidelius(hcp). 2.30 Way To Dubai(hcp). 3.00 Gaiety Musical(hcp). 3.30 Profit Street(hcp), Woodhay Whisper(hcp). **DRAW:** Little effect. **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Ardaddy** (3.30) 271 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 2.00 **Military Academy** from J & T Gosden to J Chapple-Hyam. 2.30 **Nordic Norm** from K R Burke to J R Jenkins.

THE SCOUT

12.00 Eternity's Sunrise	2.00 Torito
12.30 Alpine Culture	2.30 Invited
1.00 LORD HARCOURT	3.00 Lady Manzor
1.30 Clearpoint	3.30 Woodhay Whisper

1.00 BETMGM NURSERY 2YO
£3,716 (5) 6f 1yds (7)

1	(2)	L4261	● LORD HARCOURT (23) (C&D) E Walker 9-7	K Shoemark	80
2	(6)	4L3152	AKABUSI (23) (D) D Cunha 9-7	C Fallon	81
3	(1)	441011	UP THE AGENDA (18) (D,F) Jack Morland 9-6	C Shepherd	78
4	(5)	L4522L	ALASRAE (19) G Boughey 9-6	B Loughnane	79
5	(3)	331LL	FERMAIN (23) (D) G Boughey 9-4	Grace McEntee	80
6	(7)	5016	MIGHTY VEGA (21) (D) Lemos Souza 9-4	H Doyle	78
7	(4)	039834	GUERNSEY LADY (83) P Evans 9-4	P Cosgrave	★82

BLINKERS: No. 2 VISOR: No. 7 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 4.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Up The Agenda, 5-2 Lord Harcourt, 10-3 Akabusi, 7 Alasrae, 12 Mighty Vega, Guernsey Lady, 25 Fermain.
2024: Horus 9-3, Sean Levey 10-3 JtFav (Michael Keady), drawn (8), 8 ran.

1.30 MIDNITE HANDICAP
£7,956 (3) 5f 6ydS (5)

1	(2)	L-42111	● CLEARPOINT (53) (C&D) S Hodgson 5 9-10	A Rawlinson	101
2	(4)	0541L1	BALDOMERO (11) (D) M Appleby 7 9-4	H Davies	101
3	(3)	005893	TWILIGHT JET (28) (D) J & S Best 6 9-0	L Morris	★104
4	(5)	464915	FIDELIUS (18) (D) R Cowell 4 8-10	M Ghiani	103
5	(1)	397823	ALMATY STAR (20) (C&D,F) R Cowell 5 8-7	H Doyle	102

BLINKERS: No. 3 VISOR: No. 2 CHEEK PIECES: No. 5.

SP FORECAST: 2 Baldomero, 9-4 Clearpoint, 9-2 Almaty Star, 5 Fidelius, 8 Twilight Jet.
2024: No corresponding race.

2.00 MIDNITE QUEBEC STAKES (LISTED)
£28,355 (1) 1m 2f (5)

1	(3)	10724I	DUKE'S COMMAND (16) (C&D) (T) D O'Meara 4 9-10	B Loughnane	98
2	(2)	72L4L6	MILITARY ACADEMY (67) (D) J Chapple-Hyam 4 9-10	H Davies	104
3	(1)	33-0L36	● TORITO (30) (D) J & T Gosden 5 9-10	James Doyle	106
4	(4)	32-17L3	TYRRHENIAN SEA (30) (C&D,F) R Varian 7 9-10	J Mitchell	★114
5	(5)	226921	NEBRAS (44) (D) J & T Gosden 3 9-8	O Murphy	101

VISOR: No. 2 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 3, 5.

SP FORECAST: Evens Tyrrhenian Sea, 9-2 Nebras, 5 Torito, Military Academy, 10 Duke's Command.
2024: Royal Champion 6-9-10, Clifford Lee 5-6 Fav (K R Burke), drawn (1), 6 ran.

2.30 BETMGM'S GOLDEN GOALS HANDICAP
£4,972 (4) 1m 1yds (6)

1	(5)	L31578	● INVITED (28) (C,D) G Boughey 3 9-11	B Loughnane	92
2	(2)	346237	HITCHED (9) (C&D,F) D M Simcock 5 9-4	L Morris	89
3	(6)	2L09B0	NORDIC NORM (82) (D) J R Jenkins 3 9-3	J Peate	80
4	(4)	16300L	GREAT BLASKET (28) (D) Dr R Newland & J Insole 5 9-3	H Doyle	★94
5	(3)	562593	REY DE LA BATALLA (9) (C,D) S Dow 4 9-2	P Bradley	91
6	(1)	942353	WAY TO DUBAI (14) (D) M Appleby 6 8-7	H Davies	91

BLINKERS: No. 4 TONGUE STRAP: No. 1 CHEEK PIECES: No. 6 HOOD: No. 2.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Rey De La Batalla, 5-2 Way To Dubai, 4 Hitched, Invited, 14 Nordic Norm, Great Blasket.
2024: No corresponding race.

3.00 BETMGM FILLIES' HANDICAP
£4,972 (4) 7f 1yds (6)

1	(5)	135424	● LADY MANZOR (99) (C&D) A Perrett 3 9-9	J Dace(5)	85
2	(6)	843552	GAIETY MUSICAL (35) P Evans 4 9-8	B Loughnane	86
3	(3)	357149	KINDEST NATION (4) (D) (T) H Palmer 4 9-6	O Murphy	87
4	(2)	254L16	HANDLE WITH CARE (16) (C) M Botti 3 9-2	H Doyle	★89
5	(4)	143415	PENELOPE VALENTINE (23) (C&D) James Owen 3 8-13	L Morris	88
6	(1)	22L62L	CRYSTAL DAGGER (33) E Walker 3 8-8	Jack Doughty	86

VISOR: No. 5 CHEEK PIECES: No. 3.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Gaiety Musical, 3 Lady Manzor, 4 Kindest Nation, Penelope Valentine, 8 Handle With Care, 12 Crystal Dagger.
2024: No corresponding race.

3.30 MIDNITE HANDICAP
£5,234 (5) 6f 1yds (11)

1	(10)	65157L	BALON D'OR (23) (D) S Dow 4 9-9	P Bradley	78
2	(3)	782850	MART (29) (C&D) D Cunha 4 9-8	C Fallon	79
3	(7)	348481	LAZZAR (28) (C&D,F) R Hughes 3 9-8	F Marsh	78
4	(6)	546858	FAUSTUS (28) R Cook & J Bridger 7 9-8	K O'Neill	76
5	(5)	376811	TWILIGHT MADNESS (23) (C&D) S Hodgson 7 9-5	A Rawlinson	78
6	(1)	L21224	● WOODHAY WHISPER (11) (D) Jack Jones 3 9-5	H Crouch	78
7	(4)	6911LL	COMEDIAN LEADER (14) (D) J & S Best 5 9-5	W Cox	76
8	(8)	311666	TWIRLER (110) (D) M Attwater 4 9-5	J Glennon(7)	77
9	(9)	L17375	ARDADDY (2) (T) G Tuer 3 8-11	Doubtful	
10	(2)	46L513	PROFIT STREET (16) (D,F) James Owen 4 8-10	L Morris	77
11	(11)	547257	SOUTH SHORE ISLAND (16) A Perrett 3 8-4	J Dace(5)	★81

BLINKERS: No. 1 VISOR: No. 10 HOOD: No. 6.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Twilight Madness, 11-4 Lazzar, 5 Profit Street, 13-2 Woodhay Whisper, 12 South Shore Island, 16 Faustus, Twirler, 20 Mart, Balon D'or, 25 Others.
2024: Rebel Empire 3-9-5, Tyrese Cameron(7) 4-1 (R Hannon), drawn (5), 8 ran.

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YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

HAYDOCK: Hurdle: good-good to soft in places; chase: good to soft-good in places

12.35–KISS MY FACE (J A Anderson, 9-1) 1; Douglas Hyde (7-2) 2; Clondaw Royale (11-4 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 7 ran. 3/4l, 5l. (A Ralph; 5-2 fav Nazare). Tote: £10.00; pl £2.80, £2.20. exacta: £45.40. trifecta: £163.00. CSF: £39.77.

1.05–CAPTAIN HUGO (Sean Houlihan, 4-5 fav) 1; Wolf Walker (6-1) 2; The Cistercian (7-2 jt 2nd fav) 3. 10 ran. 2 1/2l, 3 1/4l. (P Hobbs & J White). Tote: £1.80; pl £1.10, £1.50, £1.20. exacta: £6.10. trifecta: £20.50. CSF: £7.19. Non-runner: The Egyptian Ginge.

1.35–GRAIN D'OUDAIRIES (B Hughes, 6-1) 1; Taras Halls (5-2 2nd fav) 2; Ned Tanner (4-1) 3. H'cap 6 ran. 1 1/2l, 3 3/4l. (D McCain; 2-1 fav Bowenspark). Tote: £7.00; pl £2.50, £1.80. exacta: £22.90. tricast: £66.10. trifecta: £79.20. CSF: £21.92. Non-runners: Epinephrine, Lac De Constance.

2.05–PADDY O'MAHLER (C Bewley, 9-4 jt fav) 1; Ski Lodge (9-4 jt fav) 2; I Wish You (11-2) 3. H'cap 5 ran. 1 3/4l, 12l. (J Parkinson & S Smith). Tote: £3.25; pl £1.40, £1.60. exacta: £8.00. trifecta: £22.70. CSF: £7.78.

2.35–DIAMOND JIM (Craig Nichol, 9-4 fav) 1; Lucy The Wire (11-4 2nd fav) 2; Pippin's Legend (9-1) 3. 6 ran. 4l, 5 1/2l. (O Greenall & J Guerriero). Tote: £3.25; pl £1.50, £2.00. exacta: £8.90. trifecta: £45.30. CSF: £8.75. Non-runner: Majordomo.

3.05–EGBERT (J Tudor, 5-1) 1; Jupiter Des Bordes (11-10 fav) 2; Vanillier (11-2) 3. H'cap 4 ran. 3/4l, 7 1/2l. (Christian Williams). Tote: £6.00; exacta: £11.40. trifecta: £28.90. CSF: £11.32. Non-runners: Regal Blue, Whistle Stop Tour.

3.40–SERIOUS CHALLENGE (J J Burke, 13-8 jt fav) 1; Bucephalus (12-1) 2; Brentford Hope (13-8 jt fav) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 1 1/2l, 3 1/2l. (F O'Brien). Tote: £2.63; pl £1.10, £2.70, £1.10. exacta: £18.40. tricast: £37.01. trifecta: £45.40. CSF: £20.76.

Jackpot: £10,000.00, with £6,555.83 carried over.
Placepot: £391.20
(Race 1) 3, 5; (2) 2, 10, 3; (3) 2, 5; (4) 5, 3; (5) 1, 2; (6) 2;
Quadpot: £48.70

TAUNTON: Good

12.50–WERTPOL (Paul O'Brien, 9-1) 1; My Kinda Ghaiy (15-2) 2; Madame De Labrunie (33-1) 3. 11 ran. 4 1/4l, 2 1/2l. (Harry Derham; evens fav Innamorato). Tote: £10.40; pl £2.40, £2.30, £4.60. exacta: £75.80. trifecta: £1559.50. CSF: £73.92.

1.20–RELIGOUS CROSS (C O'Farrell, 11-8 2nd fav) 1; Knock Off Soxs (5-4 fav) 2; Bye Bye Salam (33-1) 3. 13 ran. 15l, 2 1/4l. (N Mulholland). Tote: £2.38; pl £1.10, £1.30, £5.40. exacta: £4.40. trifecta: £42.20. CSF: £3.80. Non-runner: Le Beau Madrik.

1.50–FAT FACED COLUMBO (J Best, 6-4 fav) 1; Jongleur D'etoiles (25-1) 2; Reforme (22-1) 3. H'cap 10 ran. 10l, 1 1/2l. (R Mitford-Slade). Tote: £2.50; pl £1.40, £5.20, £5.20. exacta: £40.80. tricast: £627.95. trifecta: £901.60. CSF: £37.79.

2.20–ST IRENE (J Quinlan, 6-4 jt fav) 1; Lady Tadita (6-4 jt fav) 2; Al Fonce (9-2) 3. 6 ran. 2 1/2l, 1 1/2l. (Nick Scholfield). Tote: £2.50; pl £1.30, £1.50. exacta: £5.60. trifecta: £15.20. CSF: £4.10. Non-runners: Anariza, Getawhisky, Great Dance, Heron In The Park.

2.50–MASK OF ZORRO (B J Powell, 4-1 2nd fav) 1; Square Du Roule (11-10 fav) 2; Bitsnbuckles (9-2) 3. H'cap 9 ran. shd, 7l. (J Tizzard). Tote: £5.00; pl £1.70, £1.10, £1.60. exacta: £11.30. tricast: £20.23. trifecta: £25.60. CSF: £8.93. Non-runners: Chedington's Guest, It's A Breeze, Lelantos.

3.23–JUKEBOX D'EDDY (S Bowen, 2-1 fav) 1; Gingerbred (5-1) 2; Edgewell (4-1) 3. H'cap 6 ran. 8 1/2l, 7l. (T R Gretton). Tote: £3.00; pl £1.60, £2.30. exacta: £11.30. trifecta: £34.60. CSF: £13.10. Non-runner: Faitque De L'Isle.

3.55–CORNISH STORM (O Palmer, 6-1) 1; Inferno Sacree (6-1) 2; Dirty Den (4-1 jt 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 8 ran. ns, 1 1/2l. (W Kittow; 11-4 fav Border Gem). Tote: £7.00; pl £2.10, £2.00, £1.50. exacta: £51.50. tricast: £162.06. trifecta: £175.20. CSF: £42.29.

Placepot: £62.90
(Race 1) 11, 9, 8; (2) 12, 1, 5; (3) 8, 3, 7; (4) 9, 6; (5) 2, 12, 1; (6) 6, 1;
Quadpot: £3.70

WOLVERHAMPTON: Standard

4.30–FRANCESCO BARACCA (J Nicholls, 2-1 fav) 1; Circuit Breaker (9-2 2nd fav) 2; Moon Sniper (7-1) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 1l, 1 1/4l. (E J-Houghton). Tote: £3.00; pl £1.50, £2.40, £2.50. exacta: £15.40. tricast: £53.03. trifecta: £89.40. CSF: £11.40.

5.00–MUST BE TEN (C Shepherd, 9-2 2nd fav) 1; Far Too Fizzy (8-1) 2; Blindfold Games (15-2) 3. H'cap 10 ran. 3/4l, 1/2l. (J Osborne; 11-4 fav My Dad Tom). Tote: £5.90; pl £2.30, £2.80, £1.90. exacta: £49.90. tricast: £268.64. trifecta: £580.90. CSF: £41.42. Non-runner: Mister Moet.

5.30–KULLAZAIN (H Crouch, 2-1 fav) 1; Accrual (15-2) 2; Coachello (7-2 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 1l, 1l. (J Tate). Tote: £3.50; pl £1.60, £2.20, £1.80. exacta: £22.40. tricast: £51.56. trifecta: £121.10. CSF: £18.66.

6.00–CHANTELLE (L Morris, 16-1) 1; Seeing Stars (4-5 fav) 2; Fair Y Isle (17-2) 3. 8 ran. 3/4l, 1l. (Sir M Prescott). Tote: £22.50; pl £2.80, £1.20, £2.30. exacta: £54.10. trifecta: £297.40. CSF: £30.84.

6.30–JAMIE SOMMERS (R Scott, 10-11 fav) 1; Show Me Gold (9-1) 2; Faffs Gold (11-2) 3. 6 ran. nk, 3/4l. (D Loughnane). Tote: £1.91; pl £1.20, £2.80. exacta: £10.30. trifecta: £37.40. CSF: £10.62. Non-runners: Enchantres, Katie's Song.

7.00–ZIPWIRE (Taylor Fisher, 9-2) 1; Credit Forgedd It (3-1 2nd fav) 2; Snaafy (7-2) 3. H'cap 8 ran. nk, 1/2l. (J S Moore; 7-4 fav Hardstyle). Tote: £5.50; pl £1.40, £1.40, £1.70. exacta: £16.50. tricast: £54.19. trifecta: £43.60. CSF: £19.26.

7.30–WILHELMINA (J Mitchell, 4-6 fav) 1; Liv My Life (15-2 2nd fav) 2; Coeur Jaune (12-1) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 1 3/4l, nk. (K P De Foy). Tote: £1.67; pl £1.10, £2.00, £2.40. exacta: £7.70. tricast: £35.76. trifecta: £40.60. CSF: £6.72.

8.00–FIRST GREYED (B Loughnane, 9-2) 1; Serious Look (22-1) 2; Riyadh Gem (18-1) 3. H'cap 12 ran. 3l, 1l. (T Faulkner; 3-1 fav Salaria). Tote: £5.50; pl £2.00, £5.80, £6.80. exacta: £57.60. tricast: £1661.54. trifecta: £1123.50. CSF: £107.14.

8.30–SAM'S XPRESS (D E Hogan, 6-1) 1; Amerjeet (3-1 2nd fav) 2; He's An Angel (14-1) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 1/2l, 3/4l. (J & S Birkett; 11-4 fav Son Of Astar). Tote: £7.00; pl £2.20, £1.20, £2.80. exacta: £18.20. tricast: £249.47. trifecta: £227.60. CSF: £25.15. Non-runner: Peregrine Falcon.

Placepot: £29.20
(Race 1) 3, 1, 5; (2) 4, 11, 6; (3) 5, 7, 1; (4) 2, 8, 6; (5) 1, 8; (6) 3, 2, 1;
Quadpot: £6.80

WARWICK RACINGTV

JACKPOT: www.totepoolliveinfo.com

12.20 HANDICAP CHASE (GBB RACE)
£5,413 (Class 4) 3m (7 declared)

1 3/43P-F4 **HAPPY AND FINE (25)** A Hales 8 12-0 ..... **T Broughton** 122
2 113P-44 **IMMORTAL FAME (43)** Deborah Cole 9 11-13 ..... **C Iles** ★125
3 1275-53 **KILBARRY HILL (25)** O Murphy 7 11-13 ..... **L Stones** 119
4 5PPL-7P **THE NEWEST ONE (39) (D)** N & W Twiston-Davies 10 11-10 **T McCain-Mitchell(3)** 120
5 L/5LL3-3 **GEORGES SAINT (32)** V Williams 9 11-9 ..... **N Fox(3)** 124
6 61P1-L2 **CAPTAIN BOUDET (21)** J Scott 6 11-6 ..... **C Bament(3)** 123
7 141F-35 ● **CATCH CATCHFIRE (24)** I Williams 6 11-2 ..... **F Gordon** 120

BLINKERS: No. 6 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 6 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 2, 7. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 6, 7, 5, 1, 3, 4.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Catch Catchfire, 4 Kilbarry Hill, 5 Immortal Fame, Captain Boudet, 6 Georges Saint, 8 The Newest One, 12 Happy And Fine.
2024: No corresponding race.

12.52 NOVICES' HURDLE (GBB RACE)
£3,812 (4) 2m 5f 5yds (13)

1 **52**-13 **FRESH AS A DAISY (49) (F)** N Henderson 6 11-7 ..... **J Bowen** 112
2 243-154 **PISMO BEACH (18)** S Edmunds 5 11-7 ..... **C Hammond** ★120
3 **443**-L **BALLYNORTH (23)** B Pauling 5 11-0 ..... **B R Jones** 92
4 **CAMSHAFT** J & A O'Neill 4 11-0 ..... **Jonjo O'Neill Jr** –
5 4 ● **COOLKATIE (43)** D Skelton 5 11-0 ..... **H Skelton** 104
6 **4310**-03 **COUNTRY MOUSE (14)** A Ralph 5 11-0 ..... **C Gethings** 117
7 **80** **FLIGHT OF FABLE (41)** A Hales 4 11-0 ..... **B Carver** –
8 **8**-3 **INDANNYA (27)** Chester Williams 4 11-0 ..... **L Williams** 111
9 **1-212** **KATIE'S MELODY (38)** Harry Derham 5 11-0 ..... **B J Powell** 111
10 **30**/ **KHUTULUN KHAN (622)** L Wadham 6 11-0 ..... **T Cannon** –
11 **2**-LL **NOBLE GRACE (17)** W Greatrex 4 11-0 ..... **C Quinn** 97
12 L **ONE COOL MIX (24)** A Hales 6 11-0 ..... **K Woods** 31
13 **0**L **ROSE OF THE SHIRES (9)** A Hales 5 11-0 **T McCain-Mitchell(5)** 31

CHEEK PIECES: No. 13. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 9.

SP FORECAST: 7-2 Fresh As A Daisy, 4 Pismo Beach, 5 Country Mouse, 7 Katie's Melody, Indannya, 10 Coolkatie, Khutulun Khan, Ballynorth, 12 Others.
2024: Crazierthandaisy 5-11-0, Nico De Boinville 7-4 Fav (N Henderson), 16 ran.

VITAL STATISTICS

IN-FORM TRAINERS (last 10 days) T Lawes 80% (1 wins and 3 places from 5 runners), Billy Aprahamian 67% (2/2/6), C Johnston 67% (1/3/6), J Scott 62% (3/2/8), Christian Williams 60% (3/0/5).
IN-FORM JOCKEYS Alistair Rawlinson 71% (1 wins and 4 places from 7 runners), Callum Shepherd 67% (4/2/9), Callum Pritchard 62% (2/6/13).

THE SCOUT

12.20 Catch Catchfire
12.52 Coolkatie
1.22 Don't Tell Rosie
1.52 Cornish Comedy
2.22 SEATOIT (nb)
2.52 Hawk Stone
3.22 SMILE JOHN BOY (nap)

1.22 NOVICES' HANDICAP HURDLE
£3,301 (5) 2m 3f (11)

1 **L3**/46-L3 **LUWDVIG (24)** N King 6 11-13 ..... **J Quinlan** 90
2 **3-4**P6L7 **MADAJOVY (36)** D Skelton 5 11-13 ..... **H Skelton** 96
3 F75-FP1 **A GOOD YOMP (39)** Andrew Martin 6 11-12 **Dillon Butler(10)** 96
4 L423-L5 ● **DON'T TELL ROSIE (40)** J Scott 5 11-9 ..... **L Williams** ★103
5 **1**-658 **LOCAL DERBY (20)** C Gordon 5 11-9 ..... **F Gordon** 90
6 **F**2P7-L5 **KATIRA DU MESTIVEL (17)** B Pauling 5 11-8 ..... **B R Jones** 73
7 954-4 **FOLLOWING CHAPTER (50)** A Ralph 5 11-7 ..... **C Gethings** 96
8 73LL-PP **WEDNESDAY ADDAMS (21)** B Case 6 11-3 ..... **S Sheppard** 102
9 59345-4 **ARCTIC SAINT (44)** Deborah Cole 7 11-2 ..... **J Bowen** 97
10 856/5-26 **MERAKI MIST (19)** Dan Horsford 7 11-2 ..... **B J Powell** 101
11 **0**/PL-5F4 **WISTMANS PRINCE (36)** Kerry Lee 5 11-2 ..... **L Harrison** 100

BLINKERS: No. 8 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 8, 9, 11 CHEEK PIECES: No. 9 HOOD: Nos. 3, 4.

SP FORECAST: 10-3 Madajovy, 4 A Good Yomp, 9-2 Wistmans Prince, 8 Local Derby, 10 Following Chapter, Luwdvig, 12 Arctic Saint, Don't Tell Rosie, Meraki Mist, 20 Others.
2024: Lord Of All Saints 4-11-8, Bradley Harris(3) 3-1 (H Dickin), 13 ran.

1.52 RACING BLOGGER HANDICAP CHASE
£3,961 (5) 2m 4f (9)

1 251P-44 **NORTHERN AIR (26)** D Skelton 6 12-0 ..... **H Skelton** 103
2 PLP/24P- **ROGER RAREBIT (253) (D)** T Lacey 8 11-13 ..... **S Sheppard** 105
3 214L4-3 **KOENIGSSTERN (23)** N Gifford 8 11-12 ..... **J M Davies** 102
4 71366-4 **THE GREY MAN (64)** H Dickin 6 11-11 ..... **J Best** –
5 1L31-24 **BOBBI'S BEAUTY (18) (D)** M Keighley 7 11-7 ..... **F Keighley(7)** ★111
6 42/8-L **ALMEIRINDA (21)** V Williams 6 11-7 ..... **Miss L M Turner(5)** –
7 453211 **PESCATORIUS (48)** B Summers 6 11-6 ..... **Beau Morgan(5)** 105
8 LPL-4L5 **RATHMACKNEE (62)** Mrs D O'Neill 9 10-13 ..... **C Quinn** 110
9 4/6L2-L2 ● **CORNISH COMEDY (21)** R L Llewellyn 5 10-12 ..... **Charlie Price** 105

VISOR: No. 2 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 7 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 7. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 5, 3, 2, 4.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Pescatorius, 4 Northern Air, 5 Cornish Comedy, 6 Bobbi's Beauty, 10 The Grey Man, Roger Rarebit, 12 Koenigsstern, 14 Almeirinda, 20 Rathmacknee.
2024: Noche Negra 7-11-10, Jamie Brace(7) 9-4 (N & W Twiston-Davies), 7 ran.

2.22 HANDICAP HURDLE
£4,753 (4) 3m 2f (8)

1 L3142/0 **BENIGN DICTATOR (32) (C)** O Murphy 8 12-0 ..... **J Bryan** 90
2 **5**6118-2 **SUNSHINE DIAMOND (33)** N Mulholland 6 11-13 **B Harris(3)** 107
3 L22-4L2 **KAITUNA RIVER (34)** A Hales 8 11-8 ..... **K Woods** 118
4 4/LPL1-2 **GETAWAY THEATRE (42)** S Edmunds 7 11-7 ..... **C Hammond** 119
5 **2**/0544-2 ● **SEATOIT (52)** K Bailey & M Nicholls 6 11-7 ... **T Bellamy** 117
6 1273-55 **VAGUELY ROYAL (34)** S Hosie 5 11-5 ..... **P Hanlon(5)** 111
7 **5**64-052 **HARRY BRIGHT (27)** D Skelton 5 10-12 ..... **H Skelton** 116
8 P213-63 **JOLIE BAIE (22)** Miss J Davis 6 10-10 ..... **F Lambert(3)** ★121

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 8 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 1, 4, 8.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 Seatoit, 3 Getaway Theatre, 5 Harry Bright, Sunshine Diamond, 7 Benign Dictator, 10 Kaituna River, 16 Jolie Baie, 25 Vaguely Royal.
2024: Land Genie 6-11-3, Harry Skelton 4-5 Fav (D Skelton), 10 ran.

2.52 PRICEDUP.BET HANDICAP CHASE
£3,961 (5) 2m 54yds (7)

1 3612-F4 **YOUDECIDE (24)** B Pauling 5 12-0 ..... **B R Jones** –
2 3-2L433 **CHESTNUT PETE (20) (D)** Katy Price 10 11-10 **Shane Quinlan(3)** 103
3 1/8L6P-3 ● **HAWK STONE (27)** H Dickin 6 11-10 ..... **J Best** –
4 L22U-L1 **STICK WITH ME SAM (21) (D)** T R Gretton 6 11-8 ... **R T Dunne** 102
5 6L244P **BLACKIJO DAGROSTIS (36)** M Sheppard 6 10-13 ..... **S Sheppard** ★107
6 L3-9P3P **MISTERODDSOCKS (13)** B Case 5 10-9 ..... **C Gethings** 97
7 25L2-25 **EL ROJO GRANDE (18)** Katy Price 8 10-3 ..... **Sean Houlihan** 102

BLINKERS: No. 3 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 4, 5 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 5 HOOD: No. 4. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 7, 3, 4.

SP FORECAST: 11-10 Stick With Me Sam, 7-2 Youdecide, 7 Hawk Stone, 8 Blackijo Dagrostis, 10 Chestnut Pete, 12 El Rojo Grande, 25 Misterodsocks.
2024: Idealiko 6-10-8, Adam Wedge 14-1 (E Williams), 10 ran.

3.22 OPEN NH FLAT RACE (GBB RACE)
£2,178 (5) 2m (9)

1 1 ● **SMILE JOHN BOY (36) (D)** B Pauling 4 11-9 ..... **C Pritchard(3)** ★108
2 **EARL CHESTER** D Frankland 5 11-2 ..... **Mr J Stevenson(7)** –
3 3- **ETERNITY ROSE (304)** F O'Brien 4 11-2 .. **Fern O'Brien(5)** 99
4 L **PLAY ON COURT (61)** H Dickin 4 11-2 ..... **J Best** –
5 1- **RISKY OBSESSION (259)** D Skelton 4 11-2 ..... **H Skelton** –
6 2 **SOLDIER POET (30)** N Gifford 4 11-2 ..... **J M Davies** 103
7 **T R FIVE** D Bridgwater 4 11-2 ..... **B J Powell** –
8 L **I'LLHAVEABITOFTHAT (66)** C Honour 4 10-9 ..... **B Carver** 80
9 5 **MIDNIGHT DOYEN (25)** J Scott 5 10-9 ..... **L Williams** 106

SP FORECAST: 2 Risky Obsession, 9-4 Smile John Boy, 5 Soldier Poet, 6 Midnight Doyen, 7 Eternity Rose, 20 T R Five, 33 I'llhaveabitofthat, 50 Earl Chester, 100 Play On Court.
2024: No Drama This End 4-11-2, Harry Cobden 10-3 (P Nicholls), 12 ran.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Good to Soft. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2020-25):** Harry Skelton 24% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2020-25):** D Skelton 22% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.52 Northern Air (cheek pieces), 2.22 Harry Bright (cheek pieces), Kaituna River (wind surgery), 2.52 Blackijo Dagrostis (cheek pieces, tongue strap), 12.52 Rose Of The Shires (cheek pieces). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 12.20 Kilbarry Hill(hcp ch). 12.52 Ballynorth. 1.52 Bobbi's Beauty(hcp ch). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: I'llhaveabitofthat** (3.22) 173 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 1.52 **Pescatorius** from O Murphy to B Summers. 3.22 **Risky Obsession** from Matthew O'Connor in Ireland to D Skelton.

UTTOXETER SKYSPORTSRACING

12.43 SIMPLY LOGISTICS HANDICAP HURDLE
£5,651 (Class 3)2m 3f 207yds (8 dec)

1 69L8-L0 **PYRAMID PLACE (66) (D)** H Dickin 8 12-0 **S Twiston-Davies** 114
2 1-24630 **PRINCE IMPERIAL (68)** J Coulson 8 12-0 **Mr H Edwards(7)** ★127
3 120-412 **JOHN BARBOUR (31) (C&D)** F O'Brien 6 11-11 ..... **J J Burke** 124
4 **31**/21-33 ● **WOODLAND PARK (31) (D)** O Murphy 6 11-10 . **S Bowen** 125
5 P2F-PLP **MENAGGIO (37)** Billy Aprahamian 6 11-10 **Vicki Sollitt(7)** –
6 4/L1BLP- **GALASSIAN (328) (D)** Mrs M Rowley 8 11-4 ..... **T Wynne** –
7 537-3 **CATCH ON ME (21)** V Williams 5 11-2 ..... **C Deutsch** 110
8 1FPL47/ **ROCK ON CASSIE (1035) (D)** R Armson 9 10-9 **P Armson(3)** –

VISOR: No. 5 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 3, 5 CHEEK PIECES: No. 2 HOOD: No. 1. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 6, 1.

SP FORECAST: 2 Woodland Park, 9-4 John Barbour, 3 Catch On Me, 14 Pyramid Place, Galassian, 16 Prince Imperial, 20 Rock On Cassie, 25 Menaggio.
2024: Don Hollow 7-11-0, Tristan Durrell(3) 14-1 (D Skelton), 8 ran.

1.13 FEAST STREAT HANDICAP HURDLE
£3,248 (5) 2m 7f 70yds (13)

1 86P3L-P **ITSNOTEASY (40) (C)** H Dickin 7 12-0 **Tabitha Worsley(3)** –
2 1L3-L24 **FARMER JIMMY (15) (F)** M Walford 5 11-13 ..... **J Hamilton** 100
3 P8-4235 **SANDSCAPE (25)** H Daly 5 11-12 ..... **S Twiston-Davies** 100
4 **4**/54-L32 **LA HIGUERA (28)** T Lawes 6 11-9 ..... **K Brogan** 98
5 64523-3 **SUPERIOR GLANCE (21)** G Hanmer 10 11-7 ..... **B Macey(7)** 99
6 42L3-PP **HOBB'S DELIGHT (27)** N Mulholland 9 11-5 ..... **C O'Farrell** –
7 UP54-41 **GLENGOLLY (11)** Billy Aprahamian 6 11-2 ..... **G Sheehan** 101
8 2F/P33-L **KAUTO D'AMOUR (15)** J Parkinson & S Smith 10 10-13 **P J Kavanagh** 97
9 L8LL3L **COVENTRY (21)** Miss L Harrison 8 10-12 ..... **C Maggs(5)** 100
10 **39**-L03 **DONTTELLYAMUMJACK (48)** F O'Brien 4 10-12 **J J Burke** 96
11 **6**/88L-P4 ● **BOLLIN THOU (26)** Nick Scholfield 7 10-6 ..... **S Bowen** 92
12 42-8554 **SHESUPINCOURT (31) (D)** R Potter 8 10-5 ..... **B Poste** ★104
13 4P6P-P6 **ELFRIDE (38) (C&D)** R Phillips 9 10-2 ..... **Harry Atkins(7)** 90

BLINKERS: No. 1 VISOR: Nos. 3, 6 TONGUE: Nos. 7, 12, 13 CHEEK: Nos. 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 2, 7, 1, 8, 12, 5.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Glengolly, 5 La Higuera, 13-2 Bollin Thou, 7 Superior Glance, 8 Farmer Jimmy, 10 Donttellyamumjack, 12 Sandscape, 14 Others.
2024: Ithaka 8-11-11, Conor Ring 22-1 (R Potter), 14 ran.

1.43 SIMPLY LOGISTICS MAIDEN HURDLE
£4,193 (4) 2m 7f 70yds (5)

1 **U/6**-L3 **ARCTIC CONDITIONS (25)** C Boultbee-Brooks 5 11-4 **R Patrick** 112
2 **P/63**L-8 **DUBLIN CITY (32)** J S Smith 5 11-4 ..... **Doubtful**
3 **51**-P23 ● **INISHCORKER (28)** R Curtis 5 11-4 ..... **J Brace(5)** ★132
4 **U7/2**-52 **LON CHANEY (31)** O Murphy 5 11-4 ..... **S Bowen** 125
5 **3**-2 **FIRM BUT FAIR (49) (F)** Harry Derham 4 11-3 **Paul O'Brien** 120

TONGUE STRAP: No. 1.

SP FORECAST: 13-8 Inishcorker, 15-8 Lon Chaney, 9-4 Firm But Fair, 16 Arctic Conditions.
2024: Andy Amo 5-11-4, Ben Jones 11-4 (R Curtis), 10 ran.

THE SCOUT

12.43 Woodland Park
1.13 Bollin Thou
1.43 Inishcorker
2.13 Kenzoko
2.43 Jacques Clouseau
3.13 Express Surprise
3.43 Arbor Rose

2.13 MALCOLM HARRISON HANDICAP HURDLE
£3,248 (5) 1m 7f 168yds (13)

1 870 **IN THE PURPLE (33)** O Murphy 4 12-0 ..... **K Brogan** 85
2 **9**0-06 ● **KENZOKO (46)** O Murphy 5 12-0 ..... **S Bowen** 89
3 44PL-L1 **SOPHIE POWER (44) (D)** H Dickin 4 11-12 ..... **S Twiston-Davies** 97
4 4254-96 **PORT OR STARBOARD (21)** B J Llewellyn 8 11-2 ..... **J Tidball(5)** 99
5 PLP-54F **KALLY DES BRUYERES (17) (D)** David Dennis 5 11-1 ..... **J J Burke** 96
6 9L4-8L **MASTER DUNRAVEN (23)** N Mulholland 5 11-0 ..... **C O'Farrell** 94
7 4316L-1 **ERIC CARMEN (12) (C)** G Hanmer 9 10-13 ..... **B Macey(7)** 101
8 L58-46 **SACCARY (28)** D Pipe 6 10-7 ..... **J Tudor** 93
9 5-34591 **POSTPONED LEGACY (33)** M Keighley 4 10-6 ..... **Harry Atkins(7)** ★103
10 59437-3 **CHURCHMAN (37)** A Ralph 7 10-6 ..... **J Hogan** 99
11 PLF87U **CATBOY (55)** Christian Williams 5 10-5 **Mr John Joe Murphy-Knight(7)** 79
12 L-80884 **JEEPYDOFF MEEL (34) (F)** Miss L Harrison 7 10-3 **J Williamson(3)** 97
13 01-7986 **CHOSEN BAE (15)** R Potter 6 10-2 ..... **J Brace(5)** 88

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 7, 13 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 4, 7, 9, 12 HOOD: No. 6. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 13, 7, 3.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 Eric Carmen, 9-2 Sophie Power, 7 Postponed Legacy, Kenzoko, 8 Catboy, 10 Churchman, 12 Kally Des Bruyeres, 14 Saccary, 16 Others.
2024: Eaton Anne 6-11-13, Sean Bowen 11-4 Fav (O Murphy), 11 ran.

2.43 NOVICES' HANDICAP CHASE (GBB RACE)
£4,700 (4) 2m 4f (10)

1 250-2L5 **TUNE IN A BOX (25)** T Lacey 6 12-1 ..... **R Patrick** 113
2 1/52L4-3 **IL VA DE SOI (49)** Harry Derham 7 11-13 ..... **Paul O'Brien** 110
3 318-408 **KEPLER'S LAW (25)** Christian Williams 6 11-13 ..... **J Tudor** –
4 3232-22 **DISGUISEDLIMIT (23)** O Greenall & J Guerriero 6 11-6 ..... **Craig Nichol** ★121
5 **5**5482/3 **GENIETOILE (40)** R Curtis 7 11-5 ..... **J Brace(5)** 120
6 1/F5L-3 ● **JACQUES CLOUSEAU (36)** Mrs M Rowley 6 11-3 ..... **C Deutsch** –
7 3248/27- **MUMFORD'S MAGIC (428)** D Skelton 7 11-2 ..... **C J Todd** –
8 462-LL **WOTTER TROTTER (35)** D Skelton 5 11-1 ..... **T Durrell** 111
9 4P658-1 **KALHANDRION (39) (D)** R Hobson 5 11-0 ..... **C Maggs(5)** 114
10 325-425 **JUST FORTY (45)** W Greatrex 4 10-13 ..... **S Bowen** 118

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 9, 10 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 8 HOOD: No. 10. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 2, 3, 1.

SP FORECAST: 4 Just Forty, 11-2 Disguisedlimit, 6 Kalhandrion, 8 Mumford's Magic, Kepler's Law, Genietoile, Il Va De Soi, 10 Others.
2024: Taras Halls 6-11-2, Peter Kavanagh(3) 3-1 JtFav (J Parkinson & S Smith), 9 ran.

GOSSIP FROM THE GALLOPS

Lambourn: JUST FORTY (2.43 Uttoxeter)
Midlands: GLENGOLLY (1.13 Uttoxeter)
Cotswolds: SEATOIT (2.22 Warwick)
Newmarket: TYRRHENIAN SEA (2.00 Lingfield)

3.13 HANDICAP CHASE
£3,248 (5) 3m 10yds (14)

1 94U/42-U **ISLE OF GOLD (24)** K Bailey & M Nicholls 7 12-0 ..... **J J Burke** 107
2 F234-21 **KEPPEL QUEEN (91)** O Murphy 6 11-13 ..... **S Bowen** –
3 143523/ **POUGNE AMINTA (651)** A Ralph 8 11-11 ..... **J Hogan** –
4 P425-3P **GOOD WORK (34) (C)** O Greenall & J Guerriero 9 11-11 **Craig Nichol** ★112
5 3143-31 ● **EXPRESS SURPRISE (25) (D)** C Boultbee-Brooks 6 11-10 ..... **R Patrick** 105
6 562131- **SMURFETTE (400) (D)** T Ellis 7 11-9 ..... **J Andrews(3)** –
7 L6211-3 **RIVER VOYAGE (40)** R Curtis 7 11-7 ..... **J Brace(5)** 109
8 223L3-2 **FORTUNEFAVORSDBOLD (34) (D)** Christian Williams 7 11-6 **J Tudor** 106
9 8641-2L **GATA BAN (35)** N Mulholland 8 11-4 ..... **C O'Farrell** 109
10 **7**78-76 **THICKTHORN TOM (45)** D Skelton 5 10-13 ..... **T Durrell** –
11 1325-23 **EMOTIONAL ROLLER (40)** J Parkinson & S Smith 7 10-12 **P J Kavanagh** 108
12 2P15-F5 **GIBBERWELL (31) (D)** J Coulson 9 10-6 ..... **P Armson(3)** 107
13 22P4-52 **NINE NINE NINE (21)** S-J Davies 8 10-6 ..... **S Fenelon(5)** 110
14 P5-P543 **LONE SOLDIER (17)** C & A Pogson 7 10-2 ..... **T Wynne** 103

BLINKERS: No. 12 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 5, 14 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 5, 8, 12, 13, 3, 7.

SP FORECAST: 9-2 Smurfette, 6 Isle Of Gold, 7 Keppel Queen, Emotional Roller, Express Surprise, Nine Nine Nine, 12 Fortunefavorsdbold, 14 River Voyage, Thickthorn Tom, 16 Others.
2024: Jo Lescribaa 5-10-13, Charlie Deutsch 4-1 (V Williams), 11 ran.

3.43 MARES' OPEN MAIDEN NH FLAT RACE
£2,451 (5) 1m 7f 168yds (12)

1 2- ● **ARBOR ROSE (256)** Mrs M Rowley 4 11-5 ..... **T Wynne** –
2 **FERN GULLY** E Lavelle 5 11-5 ..... **H Cobden** –
3 **FLORENCE'S DREAM** N Mulholland 4 11-5 ..... **C O'Farrell** –
4 6 **JESSIE'S GIANT (35)** T Ellis 4 11-5 ..... **J Andrews(3)** 93
5 **LORO WHITE** O Murphy 4 11-5 ..... **S Bowen** –
6 **MAGGI BREEZE** G Boanas 5 11-5 ..... **J Hamilton** –
7 5 **MARIA MES (52)** J Snowden 4 11-5 ..... **G Sheehan** 80
8 2- **MILLSTATT ABBEY (256)** Noel Williams 4 11-5 ..... **J J Burke** –
9 7- **RAINBOW TARA (258)** D Skelton 5 11-5 ..... **T Durrell** ★101
10 3 **ROBERTA BISHOP (52)** Katy Price 5 11-5 ..... **S Twiston-Davies** 81
11 4 **CAPLA RESDEV (32)** M & D Easterby 3 10-4 ..... **Craig Nichol** 99
12 **SUPERIOR QUEEN** G Hanmer 3 10-4 ..... **B Macey(7)** –

TONGUE STRAP: No. 11.

SP FORECAST: 3 Rainbow Tara, 4 Fern Gully, 5 Loro White, 7 Jessie's Giant, 8 Millstatt Abbey, 10 Maria Mes, 12 Arbor Rose, 14 Florence's Dream, Capla Resdev, 25 Others.
2024: A Path To Ronda 4-11-5, James Davies 16-1 (J Snowden), 13 ran.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Good to Soft. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2020-25):** Sean Bowen 23% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2020-25):** O Murphy 22% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.13 Itsnoteasy (blinkers), Hobb's Delight (visor), 2.13 Master Dunraven (hood), 2.43 Just Forty (hood, tongue strap, wind surgery), Kepler's Law (tongue strap), Wotter Trotter (cheek pieces), 3.13 Thickthorn Tom (cheek pieces), Gata Ban (cheek pieces), 3.43 Capla Resdev (tongue strap), 12.43 Galassian (wind surgery), Menaggio (visor, tongue strap). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 12.43 Woodland Park(hcp hdl). 1.13 La Higuera(hcp hdl). 1.43 Inishcorker. 2.13 Catboy(hcp ch). 2.43 Kepler's Law(hcp hdl), Mumford's Magic(hcp ch). 3.13 Lone Soldier(hcp ch). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Prince Imperial** (12.43) & **Gibberwell** (3.13) 182 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.43 **Rock On Cassie** from G Elliott in Ireland to R Armson. 3.43 **Arbor Rose** from P Rowley to Mrs M Rowley, **Millstatt Abbey** from C Bowe in Ireland to Noel Williams, **Rainbow Tara** from T Bulgin to D Skelton.

L - Lingfield
U - Uttoxeter
W - Warwick

A Good Yomp	W	1.22
Akabusi	L	1.00
Alasrae	L	1.00
Almaty Star	L	1.30
Almeirinda	W	1.52
Alpine Culture	L	12.30
Anaba Girl	L	12.30
Arbor Rose	U	3.43
Arctic Conditions	U	1.43
Arctic Saint	W	1.22
Ardaddy	L	3.30
Baldomero	L	1.30
Ballynorth	W	12.52
Balon D'or	L	3.30
Benign Dictator	W	2.22
Blackijo Dagrostis	W	2.52
Bobbi's Beauty	W	1.52
Bollin Thou	U	1.13
Camshaft	W	12.52
Capla Resdev	U	3.43
Captain Boudet	W	12.20
Catboy	U	2.13
Catch Catchfire	W	12.20
Catch On Me	U	12.43
Chestnut Pete	W	2.52
Chosen Bae	U	2.13
Churchman	U	2.13
Clearpoint	L	1.30
Comedian Leader	L	3.30
Coolkatie	W	12.52
Cornish Comedy	W	1.52
Country Mouse	L	12.52
Coventry	U	1.13
Cryingintherain	L	12.30
Crystal Dagger	L	3.00
Disguisedlimit	U	2.43
Don't Tell Rosie	W	1.22
Donttellyamumjack	U	1.13
Dublin City	U	1.43
Duke's Command	L	2.00
Earl Chester	W	3.22
El Rojo Grande	W	2.52
Elfride	U	1.13
Emotional Roller	U	3.13
Eric Carmen	U	2.13
Eternity Rose	W	3.22
Eternity's Sunrise	L	12.00
Express Surprise	U	3.13
Farmer Jimmy	U	1.13
Faustus	L	3.30
Fermain	L	1.00
Fern Gully	U	3.43
Fidelius	L	1.30
Firm But Fair	U	1.43
Flight Of Fable	W	12.52
Florence's Dream	U	3.43
Following Chapter	W	1.22
Fortunefavorsdbold	U	3.13
Fresh As A Daisy	W	12.52
Gaiety Musical	L	3.00
Galassian	U	12.43
Gata Ban	U	3.13

INDEX

Genietoile	U	2.43
Georges Saint	W	12.20
Getaway Theatre	W	2.22
Gibberwell	U	3.13
Glengolly	U	1.13
Good Work	U	3.13
Great Blasket	L	2.30
Grey Force	L	12.30
Guernsey Lady	L	1.00
Handle With Care	L	3.00
Happy And Fine	W	12.20
Harry Bright	W	2.22
Hawk Stone	W	2.52
Hen Party	L	12.30
High Boltage	L	12.00
Hitched	L	2.30
Hobb's Delight	U	1.13
Hove Ranger	L	12.00
I'llhaveabitofthat	W	3.22
Il Va De Soi	U	2.43
Immortal Fame	W	12.20
In The Purple	U	2.13
Indannya	W	12.52
Inishcorker	U	1.43
Invited	L	2.30
Isle Of Gold	U	3.13
Itsnoteasy	U	1.13
Jacques Clouseau	U	2.43
Jeepydoff Meel	U	2.13
Jessie's Giant	U	3.43
John Barbour	U	12.43
Jolie Baie	W	2.22
Just Forty	U	2.43
Kaituna River	W	2.22
Kalhandrion	U	2.43
Kally Des Bruyeres	U	2.13
Katie's Melody	W	12.52
Katira Du Mestivel	W	1.22
Kauto D'Amour	U	1.13
Kenzoko	U	2.13
Kepler's Law	U	2.43
Keppel Queen	U	3.13
Khutulun Khan	W	12.52
Kilbarry Hill	W	12.20
Kindest Nation	L	3.00
Koenigsstern	W	1.52
La Higuera	U	1.13
La Kosmos	L	12.00
Lady Manzor	L	3.00
Lazzar	L	3.30
Local Derby	W	1.22
Lon Chaney	U	1.43
Lone Soldier	U	3.13
Lord Harcourt	L	1.00
Loro White	U	3.43
Luwdvig	W	1.22
Madajovy	W	1.22
Maggi Breeze	U	3.43
Maria Mes	U	3.43
Marseillan	L	12.00
Mart	L	3.30
Master Dunraven	U	2.13
Menaggio	U	12.43
Meraki Mist	W	1.22
Midnight Doyen	W	3.22
Mighty Vega	L	1.00
Military Academy	L	2.00
Millstatt Abbey	U	3.43
Misteroddsocks	W	2.52
Mumford's Magic	U	2.43
Nebras	L	2.00
Nine Nine Nine	U	3.13
No Drama Mama	L	12.30
Noble Grace	W	12.52
Nordic Norm	L	2.30
Northern Air	W	1.52
One Cool Mix	W	12.52
Penelope Valentine	L	3.00
Pescatorius	W	1.52
Pismo Beach	W	12.52
Play On Court	W	3.22
Poetic Grace	L	12.00
Port Or Starboard	U	2.13
Postponed Legacy	U	2.13
Pougne Aminta	U	3.13
Prince Imperial	U	12.43
Profit Street	L	3.30
Pyramid Place	U	12.43
Rainbow Tara	U	3.43
Rathmacknee	W	1.52
Rey De La Batalla	L	2.30
Risky Obsession	W	3.22
River Voyage	U	3.13
Roberta Bishop	U	3.43
Rock On Cassie	U	12.43
Roger Rarebit	W	1.52
Rose Of The Shires	W	12.52
Saccary	U	2.13
Sandscape	U	1.13
Savvi Row	L	12.00
Seatoit	W	2.22
Shesupincourt	U	1.13
Smile John Boy	W	3.22
Smurfette	U	3.13
Soldier Poet	W	3.22
Sophie Power	U	2.13
South Shore Island	L	3.30
Stick With Me Sam	W	2.52
Sunshine Diamond	W	2.22
Superior Glance	U	1.13
Superior Queen	U	3.43
Sweep In Time	L	12.00
T R Five	W	3.22
Ten Cuidado	L	12.00
The Grey Man	W	1.52
The Newest One	W	12.20
Thickthorn Tom	U	3.13
Torito	L	2.00
Tune In A Box	U	2.43
Twilight Jet	L	1.30
Twilight Madness	L	3.30
Twirler	L	3.30
Tyrrhenian Sea	L	2.00
Up The Agenda	L	1.00
Vaguely Royal	W	2.22
Way To Dubai	L	2.30
Wednesday Addams	W	1.22
Wild Act	L	12.30
Wind Summer	L	12.00
Wistmans Prince	W	1.22
Woodhay Whisper	L	3.30
Woodland Park	U	12.43
Wotter Trotter	U	2.43
Youdecide	W	2.52

WORLD OF SPORT

LIV moves closer to world ranking points

BY **NEIL McLEMAN**

LIV Golf is making "progress" towards being awarded world ranking points for their events.

The Saudi-backed tour was rocked just before Christmas when Brooks Koepka quit LIV.

And the lack of world ranking points for LIV players has seen them struggle to qualify for the Majors unless they have an existing exemption.

But Trevor Immelman, the chairman of the Official World Golf Rankings (OWGR), has suggested a deal could soon be reached. "Since the end of June, the governing board has endeavoured to thoroughly evaluate the LIV Golf application," said the South

A NUMBERS GAME

THREESY DOES IT Wiegman celebrates her third Euro triumph

HEAVEN 11 Norris joins British F1 title winners

Tom White looks at the records broken and landmarks achieved in another memorable year of sporting action.

111 – games for Manchester City striker Erling Haaland (below) to reach 100 Premier League goals, a record. He was also quickest to 50 Champions League goals, in 49 games – in both cases lowering the record by 13.

1,000 – City boss Pep Guardiola marked 1,000 games in management with his 716th win, 3-0 over Liverpool.

250 – Mohamed Salah reached 250 Liverpool goals, just the third player to do so after Ian Rush and Roger Hunt. Salah won the 2024-25 Premier League Golden Boot with 29 goals.

15 – Arsenal winger Max Dowman became the youngest ever Champions League player, aged 15 years and 308 days.

12 – Southampton's Premier League points total was only one more than Derby's record low of 11 set in 2007-08.

100 – points for both automatic promotion winners in the Championship, Leeds and Burnley. Birmingham's 111 in League One was an English league record.

60 – Chelsea's record points tally as they won their sixth successive Women's Super League title. The Blues' winning margin of 12 was also a record and they won only the third ever women's domestic treble.

0 – England went through their World Cup qualifying campaign without conceding a single goal, scoring 22 as they triumphed in all eight games.

3 – Sarina Wiegman won her third successive Women's European Championship, bringing England a second straight triumph – despite the Lionesses leading for just four minutes and 52 seconds across their three knockout matches.

£3bn – Premier League clubs set a new spending record for the summer transfer window. Liverpool spent an initial £100million on Bayer Leverkusen playmaker Florian Wirtz then a British-record £125m for Newcastle striker Alexander Isak.

1 – Bayern Munich's Bundesliga title was the first major trophy of England captain Harry Kane's career.

6 – Rory McIlroy's Masters win in April made him only the sixth man to win the modern-era career Grand Slam, joining Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods.

15-13 – Europe's Ryder Cup-winning margin at Bethpage Black, the competition's first away win in 12 years.

138* – Joe Root's (right) first-innings score in the second Ashes Test in Brisbane, his first century in Australia in 30 Test innings.

16-0 – Australia's winning margin in the Women's Ashes.

11 – Lando Norris became the 11th different British winner of the Formula One drivers' title.

2 – Norris's winning margin was the smallest since Kimi Raikkonen and Lewis Hamilton's back-to-back one-point wins in 2007 and 2008 respectively.

8 – successive men's Grand Slam tennis tournaments won by Spain's Carlos Alcaraz or Italy's Jannik Sinner as, for the second year in a row, they shared the four majors, two apiece.

6 – Luke Littler won six of the eight televised PDC ranking events – the World Championship, UK Open, World Matchplay, World Grand Prix, Grand Slam of Darts and Players Championship – as the 18-year-old became world No.1.

3 – England won the Women's Rugby World Cup for the third time, beating Canada in the final at Twickenham.

0 – gold medals for Great Britain and Northern Ireland at September's World Athletics Championship in Tokyo, with three silvers and two bronzes leaving them 21st in the medal table.

SIXTH SENSE McIlroy sinks to his knees after winning the Masters

TRIPLE CROWN England's rugby women celebrate a third World Cup title

McIlroy became the sixth golfer to complete the Grand Slam when he won the Masters

RUGBY UNION: SIX NATIONS

SHARK HUNT Clermont's Alivereti Raka is stopped by Ben Curry

Roebuck and Curry struggle for Six Nations

BY **ADAM HATHAWAY**

SALE pair Tom Roebuck and Ben Curry are struggling to make the Six Nations as boss Steve Borthwick plots his way to the opener against Wales on February 7.

Wing Roebuck and back-row Curry are not expected to feature for Sharks at least until their Prem clash with Northampton on January 24 – three days before England's pre-tournament camp in Girona.

Roebuck injured his toe in England's 33-19 win over New Zealand on November 15 and was initially told he would be out for up to 10 weeks but it looks like he will overrun that target.

Curry missed the entire autumn campaign with hamstring trouble and he has played just twice since then for a total of 96 minutes at the start of the month.

And Sale boss Alex Sanderson revealed the ball is in England's court about what they do with the two stars leading up to the tournament.

Sanderson said: "If Tom makes it before the Six Nations it will be early looking at how he is now."

On Curry he added: "There is a chance with him. I need to see what Steve's plans are – it is probably their call.

"They are both enhanced EPS contract players so if England see it as being beneficial, they could play for us, if they don't, they could go straight into Six Nations camp."

The pair are expected to attend a one-day England get-together next week but that is a day of admin and meetings ahead of the Six Nations and involves no rugby.

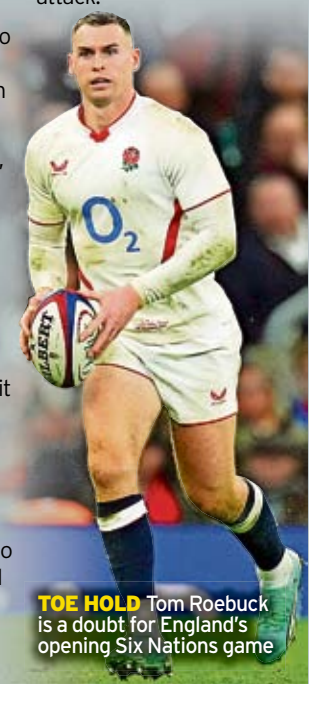
One player pushing for inclusion is Sale scrum-half Raffi Quirke who showcased his ability to play on the wing, as well as at No.9, in Sharks 43-17 win over Harlequins on Boxing Day.

The 24-year-old, first capped in 2021, was in camp during the autumn and his versatility could be crucial if Borthwick wants to play a bench of seven forwards and one back.

Sanderson added: "We have talked about it in the past and I am sure that is something that Steve and I will have a chinwag about. We have both been pushing him to find form, and he has got to a point now where he has.

"He has that capability of playing on the wing and played there for 40 minutes against Quins.

"He is able to switch positions, and the wing and the No.9 in our system have very similar roles in defence and counter-attack."


TOE HOLD Tom Roebuck is a doubt for England's opening Six Nations game

SPORT IN BRIEF

Premier League

ARSENAL (0)..... 4 — **ASTON VILLA (0) .. 1**
Gabriel 48
Zubimendi 52
Trossard 69
Gabriel Jesus 78
Watkins 90

BURNLEY (1) ..... 1 — **NEWCASTLE (2) ... 3**
Laurent 23
Joelinton 2
Wissa 7
Guimaraes 90
Att: 21,020

CHELSEA (2)..... 2 — **BOURNEMTH (2) .. 2**
Palmer 15 (pen)
Fernandez 23
Brooks 6
Kluivert 27

MAN UTD (1) ..... 1 — **WOLVES (1)..... 1**
Zirkzee 27
Krejci 45

NOTTM FOR (0)..... 0 — **EVERTON (1) 2**
Garner 19
Barry 79
Att: 30,617

WEST HAM (2)..... 2 — **BRIGHTON (1) 2**
Bowen 10
L Paqueta 45 (pen)
Welbeck 32 (pen)
Veltman 61

Enterprise National Lge

ALDERSHOT (3) ..... 4 — **WEALDSTONE (1) . 1**
Henry 2
Barrett 11
Warren 45
Hill 71 (pen)
McAvoy 21

ALTRINCHAM (0).... 1 — **YORK (1)..... 2**
Weaver 90
Newby 43
Pearce 90

BOREHAM W (2).... 2 — **SOLIHULL M (1) ... 1**
Booty 11
Rush 40
Sbarra 27
Att: 1,011

BOSTON UTD (1).... 1 — **BRACKLEY (0)..... 2**
Gallagher 45
Brown 52
Wodskou 75

CARLISLE (1)..... 1 — **MORECAMBE (0) .. 0**
Armstrong 45

FOREST GRN (1) .... 1 — **TRURO CITY (1).... 1**
Buyabu 31
Deeming 36

ROCHDALE (0) ..... 1 — **HARTLEPOOL (2) .. 2**
Henderson 80
Kougoun 22
Charman 29

SCUNTHORPE (1)... 2 — **GATESHEAD (0) 0**
Roberts 37 (pen)
Whitehall 90

SOUTHEND (1)..... 1 — **SUTTON UTD (0)... 0**
Scott-Morriss 18

TAMWORTH (0)..... 0 — **FC HALIFAX (2) 2**
Smith 4
Harris 20

WOKING (0)..... 0 — **BRAINTREE (1)..... 1**
Oteh 9

YEOVIL (1)..... 1 — **EASTLEIGH (1) 1**
McCormick 29
Blair 45 (pen)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boreham Wood	24	16	5	3	48	22	53
York	24	15	7	2	63	26	52
Rochdale	22	17	1	4	42	16	52
Carlisle	25	16	4	5	44	27	52
Forest Green	25	14	8	3	42	23	50
Scunthorpe	24	14	7	3	41	25	49
Southend	23	12	5	6	35	18	41
FC Halifax	25	11	5	9	38	34	38
Hartlepool	25	9	10	6	29	21	37
Solihull Moors	25	9	7	9	40	37	34
Woking	25	8	8	9	32	28	32
Wealdstone	25	8	8	9	33	39	32
Tamworth	25	9	4	12	30	45	31
Eastleigh	24	7	7	10	27	33	28
Yeovil	25	8	4	13	23	33	28
Altrincham	25	8	2	15	29	40	26
Brackley	24	7	5	12	18	30	26
Boston Utd	25	6	7	12	28	38	25
Braintree Tn	25	6	6	13	18	32	24
Aldershot	25	6	5	14	41	49	23
Sutton Utd	24	5	8	11	34	44	23
Morecambe	25	5	5	15	31	55	20
Truro City	25	5	4	16	24	45	19
Gateshead	24	5	4	15	28	58	19

William Hill Scottish Prem

DUNDEE (0) ..... 2 — **KILMARNCK (1).... 1**
Hay 57
Reilly 72
Kiltie 38
Att: 5,039

HIBERNIAN (0)..... 2 — **ABERDEEN (0)..... 0**
Klidje 60
Hoilett 90
Att: 18,848

LIVINGSTON (0) ..... 1 — **DUNDEE UTD (1) .. 3**
McLennan 90
Sapsford 33
McGowan 86 (og)
Ahmed 90

MOTHERWELL (1).. 2 — **CELTIC (0)..... 0**
Said 14
Watt 58
Att: 11,435

RANGERS (1) ..... 2 — **ST MIRREN (0) 1**
Aasgaard 39
Fernandez 52
Mandron 82
Att: 50,526

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hearts	19	12	5	2	38	17	41
Celtic	19	12	2	5	33	18	38
Rangers	19	9	8	2	27	16	35
Motherwell	20	8	9	3	28	16	33
Hibernian	20	8	7	5	33	22	31
Dundee Utd	20	5	10	5	28	29	25
Aberdeen	19	7	4	8	20	23	25
Falkirk	19	6	6	7	20	27	24
Dundee	20	5	4	11	18	33	19
St Mirren	18	4	6	8	16	24	18
Kilmarnock	20	2	7	11	18	35	13
Livingston	19	1	6	12	20	39	9

WELSH PREMIER LEAGUE: Cardiff Met Uni 0 Haverfordwest County 0.

DARTS

PDC PADDY POWER WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (Alexandra Palace, London)—**4th rd: K Ratajski** (Pol) bt L Woodhouse (Eng) 4-2, **J Clayton** (Wal) bt A Harrysson (Swe) 4-2, **J Hood** (Eng) bt J Rock (Nirl) 4-0, **G Van Veen** (Ned) bt C Manby (Eng) 4-1, **G Anderson** (Sco) bt M Van Gerwen (Ned) 4-1.

TODAY'S DIARY

Welsh Premier: Bala Tn v Caernarfon Tn (12.30), Briton Ferry v Barry Tn United (12.30), Connah's Quay Nomads v The New Saints FC (2.30).

ICE HOCKEY

Elite League: Fife Flyers v Dundee Stars, Glasgow Clan v Belfast Giants, Nottingham Panthers v Coventry Blaze.

Littler ready to mix it with Palace boo boys on NYD

BY **RICHARD LEWIS**

LUKE LITTLER has no regrets for the way he reacted to the hostile fans as he reached the quarter-finals at Alexandra Palace.

But the world champion expects "the worst" as he prepares to face the crowd again tomorrow.

Littler was booed and jeered during his 4-2 defeat of Rob Cross and could be landed with a similar reaction in his last-eight match against Poland's Krzysztof Ratajski on New Year's Day.

But 'The Nuke' said: "That's the first time I've been at the World Championship and the crowd haven't wanted me to win.

"I expect the worst on New Year's Day, wherever I do play.

"And whatever happens, happens. I'm ready for New Year's Day. It was just pure emotion. I said what I said. I was going to say it last year at some point, but the fans, they pay for the tickets.

"Pretty much they're paying our prize money. So I'm not regretting anything."

It was very much out of character at the end of the match as Littler's emotion seemed to get the better of him as he gestured to the Ally Pally crowd.

"I can learn a lot," said Littler. "I can learn how to deal with the crowds a bit better, not let as much emotion out. Just keep it all in me until that final dart."

The 18-year-old still averaged 106.58 against Cross and knows it might have been different in the past.

He added: "Two years ago, I think I would have started throwing my darts left-handed. But that's how much I've grown. That's how much I've matured.

"And people might not say I'm mature, but try to be in my position.

"The fans, they've done what they've done. I've reacted as any other player would really. I might have reacted a bit too early on after that first set and then when I come on for the second set they are still at it.

"Obviously, like I said there, they want the underdog to win.

"They want the favourites to go out. And I just had to get out of the way and get my job done."

World No.1 Littler once more showed his quality on this greatest darts stage of them all as he hit 17 180s.

Littler said: "From the start, I wasn't thinking about averages or 180s or anything like that because I said pre-match that Rob's not going to play anywhere near what he has been doing and that's why he's nearly put a 99 against me.

"I'm only a few games away from lifting the trophy once again. But the performance (on Monday) just really doesn't feel like a 106 and a half because it was just that much adrenalin going through me, that much emotion, the anger. But I can say I'm glad that I won."

It will be some day for Ratajski (left) as he celebrates his 49th birthday tomorrow after some afternoon yesterday as he beat Luke Woodhouse 4-2.

In a real roller coaster, Woodhouse just failed to land a nine-darter, missing double 12, as he led 1-0 in the third set with the match at 1-1. And he then lost the leg.

Ratajski said of facing Littler: "It is the biggest challenge you can imagine.

"He is the best player, he is the world champion, but everything is possible."

JEER WE GO AGAIN Luke Littler 'expects the worst' from Ally Pally fans

You've got to troll with it

HOOD DOUBLES DOWN TO ROCK JOSH

BY **RICHARD LEWIS**

A STAR was born on the Ally Pally stage yesterday as Justin Hood produced one of the greatest performances in World Championship history.

World No.68 Hood, who is making his debut at these worlds, stunned No.11 seed Josh Rock 4-0 with a display of such quality that he landed a record 11 doubles in a row.

Only when he was throwing for the match did he miss his first double, before making no mistake two legs later.

Hood, from Somerset, was unstoppable – and credit to Rock, too, whose sportsmanship was at its finest as he watched on and smiled at times at his opponent's near-perfect display.

"It is not a fairy tale – I know what I can do and it is nice to prove it up there," said Hood, 32.

He even had to pause his live on-stage television interview, such was the noise of the crowd booming out his name.

Hood added: "I am not used to this – I usually get hate messages. This is mad, this is mad.

"There is no fame. I will be the same, whether I am here or down the local. I won't change."

He won the match in style on a finish of 119 – treble 19, treble 12, double 13 – as he reached the quarter-finals and a guaranteed payday of £100,000. It's a figure that moves him closer to his dream of opening a Chinese restaurant.

Hood hit 10 180s, securing a three-dart match average of 101.18.

Hood will play Gary Anderson next after the Scot beat Michael van Gerwen in their clash of the darting titans.

Anderson, who went back-to-back at Ally Pally in 2015 and 2016, averaged just under 100 to see off three-time world champ Van Gerwen 4-1 and will return on New Year's Day.

'The Flying Scotsman', 55, said: "I was rotten, Michael was rotten. I pinched it at the end, but happy to get through. It was one of those games."

In the afternoon session, Jonny Clayton confirmed his rise to fourth in the world after hitting back from a set down to defeat Sweden's Andreas Harrysson 4-2.

UNBELIEVABLE Justin Hood's run continues

DOWN AND OUT

Smith loses England place at T20 World Cup after Ashes woes

BAT OUT OF HELL Jamie Smith has endured a nightmare Ashes series

BY **RORY DOLLARD**

JAMIE SMITH has been dropped from England's T20 World Cup squad – but the injured Jofra Archer and uncapped quick Josh Tongue have both been included.

Test performances in Australia are hardly the most obvious metric for the short-form event taking place in Sri Lanka and India in February, but Smith's dramatic loss of form in the Ashes may be a factor in his omission.

The wicketkeeper-batter smashed 60 from 26 balls in his last T20 appearance against the West Indies in June.

He was then rested due to a heavy workload from the following series against South Africa and Ireland. Now, after a difficult series Down Under that has seen him average just 19.85 with the bat and struggle at times behind the stumps, he has been left out entirely.

Tongue's stock has gone in completely the opposite direction after impressive performances in both Adelaide and Melbourne. He has never played white-ball cricket for England, but did finish as top wicket-taker in last season's Hundred competition.

He claimed 14 scalps in just six games, and boasts a T20 strike-rate of a wicket every 12.5 balls.

Archer has been handed a spot in the 16-man squad in the expectation that his recovery from a left side strain will be complete in time.

Archer given time to recover from his latest injury blow as Tongue lines up debut for white-ball team

The pace bowler played each of the first three Ashes Tests before pulling up with the latest in a long line of fitness issues and is expected to be out for three to six weeks. That puts him on a tight timeline for England's first group game on February 8.

Brydon Carse has effectively been named as his understudy. Carse will travel as part of the ODI and T20 squads for the bilateral tour of Sri Lanka which precedes the tournament, and will replace Archer if there are any hiccups on his comeback trail.

Test opener Zak Crawley also appears in the 50-over leg of that trip, despite playing no List A cricket since his last ODI outing in December 2023.

Opener Ben Duckett has been retained after a taxing time in Australia, where his faltering form and apparently intoxicated appearance in a social media clip put him under the spotlight.

Like Smith, he was given time off at the end of the English season to protect against burnout, but the England management have concluded he is still fresh enough to play his part on the sub-continent, where his ability against spin could be useful.

Harry Brook will lead his first World Cup campaign as captain with a familiar roll call of players he has leaned on since taking over, including predecessor Jos Buttler, Phil Salt, Jacob Bethell, Adil Rashid, Sam Curran, Liam Dawson and Luke Wood. Fast bowling all-rounder Jamie Overton, leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed and batter Tom Banton also get the nod.

Essex's Jordan Cox was close to making the cut and is likely to be first reserve in case of any withdrawals from the batting group.

England will face Bangladesh, West Indies, Italy and Nepal in Group C, with managing director Rob Key and head coach Brendon McCullum both hoping for a strong showing to firm up their positions after the Ashes loss.

ENGLAND SQUADS

T20 squad (Sri Lanka tour and World Cup): H Brook (c), R Ahmed, J Archer (WC only), T Banton, J Bethell, J Buttler, B Carse (SL only), S Curran, L Dawson, B Duckett, W Jacks, J Overton, A Rashid, P Salt, J Tongue, L Wood.

ODI Squad v Sri Lanka: H Brook (c), R Ahmed, T Banton, J Bethell, J Buttler, B Carse, Z Crawley, S Curran, L Dawson, B Duckett, W Jacks, J Overton, A Rashid, J Root, L Wood.

ON THE UP Josh Tongue topped the Hundred rankings

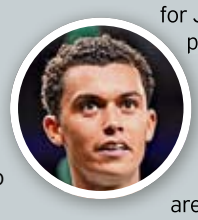
STRAIN GAME Quick Jofra Archer is now in a race to get fit in time

Brenn's Spurred on despite Palace deal

BY **RYAN TAYLOR**

THOMAS FRANK expects Brennan Johnson to be available to face Brentford tomorrow – despite his Tottenham side agreeing a £35million deal with Crystal Palace.

The Danish head coach, who continued to insist the 24-year-old (above) is a "very important player" for Spurs, said: "I expect him fully to be available and able to play against Brentford. There's rumours out there, in general I'll not comment on that."



While Palace have already agreed the framework of a transfer for Johnson, the player is biding his time and wants to assess all options on the table.

Bournemouth are in the mix too as they prepare to part company with Antoine Semenyo while Sunderland, Everton and Aston Villa have varying degrees of interest.

FANS 'PRICED OUT'

A FANS' group says "alarm bells should be ringing" at FIFA with England's most loyal supporters failing to take up their full ticket allocation for next summer's World Cup final and semi-final.

The majority of the tickets available to the England Supporters Travel Club for the final in New Jersey cost at least £3,094. And the Football Supporters' Association says the fact that England's 4,500 allocation for the final in the USA is undersubscribed should be a big concern.

The FSA added: "The numbers are reflective of a fan-base that has been priced out, and some of the most loyal supporters of the international game feel completely let down."

Liverpool set-piece coach gets the axe

BY **IAN DOYLE**

LIVERPOOL have confirmed Aaron Briggs has left his position as set-piece coach.

Arne Slot's side have conceded 12 goals from dead-ball situations in 18 top-flight games this season and have scored only three times from set-pieces.

Both the club and Briggs reached an agreement over his exit, but with no replacement lined up, the onus will now fall on Slot and his staff to improve the Reds' record at set-pieces.

Briggs' exit is the latest backroom change from last season. Giovanni van Bronckhorst replaced John Heitinga as assistant coach, with Xavi Valero and Colin Stewart joining the goalkeeping set-up.

Meanwhile, Anfield's Italian forward Federico Chiesa is wanted on loan by his former club Juventus as the Turin giants chase the Serie A title.

NUNO'S RAF RAID

BY **RYAN TAYLOR**

WEST HAM have made an approach for FC Viktoria Plzen striker Rafiu Durosinmi.

The Nigerian, who was wanted by Wolves in 2023 and later failed a medical at Eintracht Frankfurt, has scored 13 goals for his Czech side in all competitions this season.

Reports claim the Hammers have bid £12million for the 22-year-old – but Plzen want more as Durosinmi is out of contract at the end of the season.

He is also being tracked by Benfica, Lazio and Stuttgart.

Fulham winger Adama Traore, who worked with Hammers boss Nuno Espirito Santo at Wolves, is also a target for West Ham.

JAMES 1ST
Garner scores
Pic credit: SmartFrame/ Pro Sports Images

GARNER SAYS NO DYCHE TO SEAN'S BOYS

N Forest 0 Everton 2

BY **SARAH CLAPSON**

JAMES GARNER came back to haunt former club Nottingham Forest as he shone in Everton's return to winning ways.

The midfielder spent a season and a half on loan at the City Ground, helping them win promotion to the Premier League, but there was no room for sentiment as he scored one and made Thierno Barry's second after the break in a virtuoso display.

It saw David Moyes' side record a much-needed victory after three games without a win as they beat Forest for the second time in three and a half weeks.

The win also pours more misery on their former boss Sean Dyche (inset), whose side just cannot pull away from relegation danger.

On the back of successive defeats, and still precariously placed in the Premier League table, their final match of 2025 was a big one for Dyche's side.

However, they made a slow start and found themselves behind with less than 20 minutes on the clock.

It was a muted celebration from Garner against his former club.

Latching on to a lovely through-ball from reported Reds January transfer target Dwight McNeil, the midfielder slotted past John Victor to give the visitors the lead.

Forest's best early opportunity fell to Callum Hudson-Odoi on the half-hour mark, but the winger could only scuff his shot wide from Neco Williams' deep ball to the back post.

And it took until the 44th minute for Dyche's charges to register their first effort on target.

Forest needed something to change in the second half, other than lumping crosses into the box, which were being gobbled up by Everton's defenders. Dyche turned to his bench and brought on Douglas Luiz in a bid to turn things around.

There was some improvement, but the Reds failed to make the most of their openings and paid the price when Barry wrapped up the points for Everton in the 79th minute, firing home Garner's defence-splitting pass.

NOTTM FOREST (4-2-3-1): John Victor; Williams, Murillo, Milenkovic, Zinchenko; Anderson, Dominguez (Douglas Luiz 46); Hutchinson, Gibbs-White, Hudson-Odoi (Bakwa 75); Jesus (Awoniyi 62).
EVERTON (4-2-3-1): Pickford; Patterson (Grealish 72), Tarkowski, O'Brien, Mykolenko; Garner, Iroegbunam; Dibling, Rohl, McNeil; Barry (Beto 85).

CHELSEA 2
Palmer 15 (pen), Fernandez 23
BOURNEMOUTH 2
Brooks 6, Kluivert 27

Set-pieces undoing of Maresca's Blues again

BY **BOBBY VINCENT**

CHELSEA were once again stung by long throw-ins as Antoine Semenyo had a big part to play in potentially his final bow for Bournemouth.

The Cherries took the lead at Stamford Bridge through David Brooks after a Semenyo launch caused chaos in the Blues' box, though the visitors' lead did not last too long.

Cole Palmer converted from the penalty spot, just eight minutes before Enzo Fernandez put the Blues ahead.

The frantic start to the match continued when another long throw caught the home side out.

Semenyo's delivery came off Trevoh Chalobah and Justin Kluivert was on hand to tap in at the far post.

No team has conceded more goals from long throw-ins than the Blues – with four – in the Premier League.

Semenyo started for the Cherries despite increasing speculation that he is set to join Manchester City in the coming days.

Just seven minutes in and Semenyo played a huge role in the opening goal.

The Ghanaian's long throw caused havoc in the Chelsea box and Brooks found himself with a close-range header that was initially saved by Robert Sanchez, but the Cherries captain scored from the rebound.

Chelsea were not behind for long, however, with Estevao winning a penalty after being fouled by Semenyo. Referee Sam Barrott waved suggestions of a penalty away initially, but changed his mind after being advised to go to the pitch-side screen.

Palmer expertly put his spot-kick into the bottom corner and beat Djordje Petrovic, despite the former Chelsea goalkeeper guessing the right way.

Eight minutes later, the Blues were ahead through Fernandez (left). Alejandro Garnacho laid the ball off to his Argentine compatriot before the midfielder unleashed a thunderous strike into the top right-hand corner.

Chelsea, though, could not deal with Bournemouth's most deadly weapon in the form of Semenyo's arms. The winger once again launched one into the box and it deflected off Chalobah's head before being met by a thankful Kluivert.

At half-time the score was level, but Bournemouth may well have felt aggrieved.

The Cherries recorded 13 shots – the most they have ever had in an away match in the Premier League.

Liam Delap had a chance to restore Chelsea's lead in the 55th minute after a swift Blues counter-attack but the striker's header was over.

Palmer was taken off with 63 minutes gone, in place of Joao Pedro, with some of the home supporters booing Blues boss Enzo Maresca's decision.

Estevao came close to giving his side the lead moments after but his effort was well saved by Petrovic.

Fernandez had the chance to win it for the Blues with 13 minutes remaining but his effort inside the box went comfortably over the bar.

It is now three games without a win in the Premier League for the Blues, while Bournemouth's long wait for an away victory in the top flight continues.

ENZO'S POTTY THROW-DOWN

BOURNE SLIPPY
Kluivert converts for Cherries

PREMIER LEAGUE

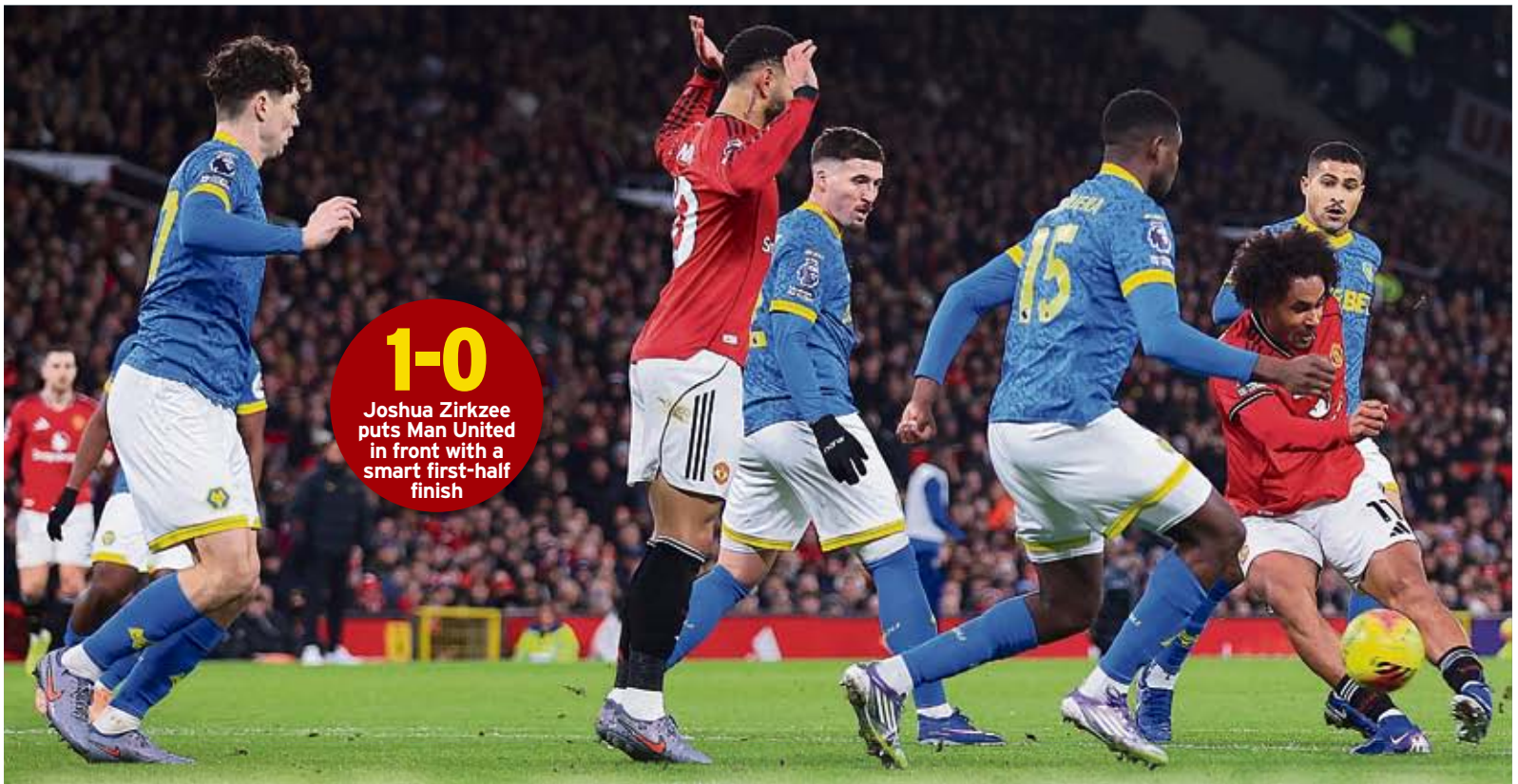
CHELSEA		B'MOUTH
67%	POSSESSION	33%
3	SHOTS ON TARGET	6
6	SHOTS OFF TARGET	7
545	TOTAL PASSES	260
12	CORNERS	3
0	OFFSIDE	1
5	FOULS	12
0	CARDS	1
1		0

REF: Sam Barrott

LINE-UPS

CHELSEA (4-2-3-1): Sanchez; Acheampong (James 46), Fofana, Chalobah, Gusto; Caicedo, Fernandez; Estevao (Gittens 90), Palmer (Pedro 63), Garnacho (Neto 46); Delap (Santos 87).
B'MOUTH (4-2-3-1): Petrovic; Jimenez, Senesi, Hill, Truffert; Scott, Tavernier; Brooks (Adli 78), Kluivert (Smith 90), Semenyo; Evanilson (Unal 82).

MAN OF THE MATCH
ANTOINE SEMENYO



IT'S DRIVING ME CRA-ZFE!

Amorim is left frustrated as winless Wolves force draw after Zirkzee fires United ahead

MAN UNITED Zirkzee 27	**1**
WOLVES Krejci 45	**1**

BY **JEREMY CROSS**

CHRISTMAS is a time for miracles – and Wolves almost produced one at Old Trafford.

But even though the Premier League's rock-bottom side couldn't break their season's duck with a victory it didn't stop Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim from spitting feathers.

Somehow it felt fitting that United ended 2025 by failing to beat the worst team in the top flight.

And on this evidence, there is little to suggest 2026 will be much better for a United side which has become the masters of being predictably unpredictable.

Joshua Zirkzee had fired United ahead, when his deflected shot beat keeper Jose Sa on 27 minutes.

But the visitors stunned Old Trafford with a shock equaliser from Ladislav Krejci on the stroke of half time. And it took a sensational double save from Senne Lammens to deny Krejci and then Yerson Mosquera from securing a win for Wolves that would have been as rare as a visit from Santa Claus himself.

United had headed into this clash with a host of leading lights missing, due to a combination of injuries and Africa Cup of Nations duty.

But despite Amorim having to field a weakened team, it was difficult to see anything other than a home win.

That's because Wolves were the visitors. A team with just two points to their name this season and bottom of the table, 16 points from safety.

A side which had lost 25 league games this year, one short of matching the most ever in a calendar year, a record set by Ipswich Town in 1994. But Wolves were the better team in the first half and didn't deserve to go behind.

Yet Sa was left with no chance when Zirkzee's shot deflected off the stomach of Krejci, to see the Dutchman score his first league goal on this ground in more than 12 months.

Given Wolves' track record, the outcome felt inevitable.

But the visitors started to threaten and created chances which Tolu Arokodare and Hugo Bueno both missed.

Yet the leveller Wolves deserved came on the stroke of half time, when Krejci arrived at the back post to send a downward header past the outstretched hand of Lammens.

United were booed off at the interval – and Amorim looked furious.

His mood wasn't helped when Sa somehow clawed out a header towards his own goal from Mosquera.

When Jhon Arias saw a powerful effort whistle just wide, the visitors sensed a famous triumph.

Wolves looked the more likely winners, only for Lammens to ride to United's rescue and tone down the shade of red Amorim and his flops were left with on their faces.

PREMIER LEAGUE

MAN UTD		WOLVES
57%	POSSESSION	43%
6	SHOTS ON TARGET	4
5	SHOTS OFF TARGET	5
505	TOTAL PASSES	387
8	CORNERS	4
3	OFFSIDE	1
9	FOULS	12
0 0	CARDS	2 0

REF: Thomas Bramall

LINE-UPS

MANCHESTER UNITED (4-2-3-1): Lammens; Dalot, Heaven (Yoro 75), Martinez, Shaw; Ugarte (Mantato 75), Casemiro; Dorgu, Cunha, Zirkzee (Fletcher 46); Sesko

WOLVES (3-4-2-1): Sa; Doherty, Mosquera, Krejci; Tchatchoua, Arias (Moller Wolfe 95), Gomes, Bueno; Mane, Hee-chan (Fer Lopez 88); Arokodare (Strand Larsen 65)

MAN OF THE MATCH
SENNE LAMMENS

POINTS DROPPED United boss Ruben Amorim shows his frustration

WIZARD WISSA UP & RUNNING FOR MAGPIES

Burnley 1 Newcastle 3

BY **LEE RYDER**

YOANE WISSA scored on his first Premier League start for Newcastle as boss Eddie Howe signed off 2025 with a priceless victory to silence some of his critics.

The win was not the prettiest, but the Magpies got the job done and Howe's side pulled away from the bottom half of the table.

Manager Howe had endured some fierce social media comments in the build-up to the game but his players responded with a decent performance for him.

The Magpies could not have asked for a better start as they scored after 65 seconds.

Anthony Gordon got free down the left and picked out Joelinton arriving in the box for the Brazilian to clip it past his former team-mate Martin Dubravka.

If that was deemed the dream start for Newcastle, it was soon even better as Wissa pounced to double that advantage.

Gordon and Joelinton (right) were involved again down the right this time, before Dubravka fumbled Harvey Barnes' shot.

Bruno Guimaraes then tried his luck before Dubravka failed again to keep the ball out, and Wissa (top) needed two bites at it from close range after Kyle Walker's initial clearance on the line.

Burnley threatened to reduce arrears midway through the first half when Marcus Edwards drove through the middle and sent an effort flashing wide of the target.

And Edwards was heavily involved in the moment that hauled Burnley back in it on 23 minutes.

Another slicing run opened up Newcastle before Armando Broja headed into the path of Josh Laurent, who rifled home to make it 2-1.

The Clarets came close to an equaliser on 61 minutes when Laurent's header clipped the crossbar and Loum Tchaouna headed wide of the upright in another let off for Toon.

Edwards then slipped in Lucas Pires down the left with 19 minutes left but he struck it well wide.

Howe turned to Jacob Murphy first before bringing on Nick Woltemade and Jacob Ramsey for the closing stages.

And hopes of a Burnley fightback where killed off when Sandro Tonali's pass resulted in another fumble from Dubravka.

Bruno Guimaraes was the grateful recipient and he clipped the ball into the unguarded net.

HAMMERS LET VICTORY SHOT GO TO WASTE

WEST HAM 2
Bowen 10, Paqueta 45+4 pen
BRIGHTON 2
Welbeck 32 pen, Veltman 61

BY **PATRICK AUSTEN-HARDY**

WEST HAM missed a huge opportunity to close the gap on 17th-placed Nottingham Forest after letting the lead slip twice.

Hammers boss Nuno Espirito Santo came into the contest without a win in eight matches.

His hopes were not helped by Brighton's astonishing record of never having lost an away fixture at the London Stadium.

The Seagulls' unbeaten streak in east London extended to nine matches, despite the hosts getting in front twice.

An extraordinary first half started with Lucas Paqueta slipping Jarrod Bowen through on goal. The Hammers skipper slid the ball under keeper Bart Verbruggen.

The move was a flashback to happier times for the Hammers, when Bowen scored the winner against Fiorentina in the Europa Conference League final. But instead of David Moyes running down the touchline, West Ham fans had to watch Brighton forward Yankuba Minteh bear down on their goal before Maximilian Kilman's out-stretched leg brought him down.

Danny Welbeck (circle) stepped up and swiped his penalty into the bottom corner, sending Alphonse Areola the wrong way.

A good first-half performance threatened to implode when Paqueta rugby-tackled Lewis Dunk in the penalty area, but Welbeck chipped his second spot-kick, Panenka-style, onto the crossbar.

Verbruggen did not need to make many saves in the opening 45 minutes, but he would have been surprised to see Dunk throw himself across goal and block Callum Wilson's shot with his arm.

Referee Michael Salisbury waved the Hammers' penalty appeals away, but overturned his original decision after a VAR check.

Paqueta tip-toed his way to the ball before giving Verbruggen the eyes. He swept the ball into the opposite corner and celebrated (above).

In east London, one-goal leads are never safe, as Brighton defender Joel Veltman proved when he tapped home a set-piece at the back post after a weak punch from Areola. As anxiety began to fill the London Stadium and the Hammers back-line, Brighton began to believe a winner was within reach.

Areola was fortunate a strike from Kaoru Mitoma did not cross the line after it squirmed under his wrist, before making a more convincing save from Brajan Gruda.

Georginio Rutter thought he found a winner with a fiercely struck half-volley, but it skipped wide by inches. Brighton keep their unbeaten record at the stadium, but a point does little to help either side.

WEST HAM (4-3-2-1): Areola; Walker-Peters (Mayers 83), Todibo (Mavropanos 48), Kilman, Scarles; Magassa (Soucek 82), Potts, Fernandes; Paqueta (Kante 83), Bowen; Wilson (Summerville 63)

BRIGHTON (3-4-2-1): Verbruggen; Dunk, Van Hecke, Veltman; Kadioglu, Ayari, Milner (Hinshelwood 72), De Cuyper (Mitoma 58); Minteh (Gruda 58), Gomez (Rutter 72); Welbeck (Kostoulas 83)

REFEREE: Michael Salisbury

PREMIER LEAGUE

ARSENAL		VILLA
47%	POSSESSION	53%
7	SHOTS ON TARGET	3
8	SHOTS OFF TARGET	3
351	TOTAL PASSES	408
3	CORNERS	3
4	OFFSIDE	0
18	FOULS	90
0	CARDS	3
1		0

REF: Darren England ATT: 60,279

LINE-UPS

ARSENAL: (4-3-3): Raya; Timber (Ewhite 83), Saliba, Gabriel (Lewis-Skelly 77), Hincapie; Zubimendi, Merino (Norgaard 72), Odegaard; Saka, Trossard, Gyokeres

ASTON VILLA: (4-2-3-1): Martinez; Bogarde, Konsa, Lindelof, Digne; Onana (McGinn 46), Tielemans (Hemmings 82); Sancho (Malen 61), Rogers (Jimo-aloba 82), Buendia (Garcia 61); Watkins

MAN OF THE MATCH
MARTIN ODEGAARD

PREMIER TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	19	14	3	2	37	12	45
Man City	18	13	1	4	43	17	40
Aston Villa	19	12	3	4	30	23	39
Liverpool	18	10	2	6	30	26	32
Chelsea	19	8	6	5	32	21	30
Man Utd	19	8	6	5	33	29	30
Sunderland	18	7	7	4	20	18	28
Everton	19	8	4	7	20	20	28
Brentford	18	8	2	8	28	26	26
Newcastle	19	7	5	7	26	24	26
Crystal Palace	18	7	5	6	21	20	26
Fulham	18	8	2	8	25	26	26
Tottenham	18	7	4	7	27	23	25
Brighton	19	6	7	6	28	27	25
Bournemouth	19	5	8	6	29	35	23
Leeds	18	5	5	8	25	32	20
Nottm Forest	19	5	3	11	18	30	18
West Ham	19	3	5	11	21	38	14
Burnley	19	3	3	13	20	37	12
Wolves	19	0	3	16	11	40	3

1-0
Gabriel makes the most of a keeper error to score the opener for Arsenal

ARSENAL 4
Gabriel 48, Zubimendi 52, Trossard 69, Jesus 78
ASTON VILLA 1
Watkins 90+4

BY **JOHN CROSS**

IF THEY did not believe before, they will now.

This was a statement victory by Arsenal as they rose to the challenge and put themselves five points clear at the top of the Premier League.

Arsenal produced a sensational second half performance to blow Aston Villa away and prove they have the mentality and character to win the title. They went back to doing what got them to the top in the first place: set-pieces, free-flowing football with pace and energy.

It was no coincidence that Arsenal scored their first goal from a corner in two months because giant defender Gabriel was back in the starting line-up.

Gabriel Jesus came on and scored with his first touch with a glorious finish while Martin Zubimendi and Leandro Trossard also scored in between.

There was a big Declan Rice shaped hole in Arsenal's midfield which made for a very edgy first half. So what happened? Martin Odegaard stepped up

EMI DROPS THE BALL!

Martinez clanger opens floodgates as fourmidable Gunners send title message

in the second half with the sort of commanding display which shows exactly why he is club captain.

Odegaard led by example, drove the team on and, amid a sensational second half full of big performances, he topped the lot. At 4-0 with the clock ticking down, the away end emptied out as Villa's 11 game winning run came to an abrupt halt.

Blimey, it is a long way to come in a midweek but it was as if Villa's loyal fans had given up on their title charge as they fell six points behind leaders Arsenal.

The home fans, who have been so edgy and nervous in recent games, loved it as they mocked former Arsenal boss Unai Emery and ex-Gunners keeper Emi Martinez who was overwhelmed by the second half goal rush.

It is hard to remember two such contrasting halves because Arsenal did look nervous at first and, in the opening 20 minutes, Villa got behind the home defence only for Ollie Watkins to miss a glorious chance.

Slowly, Arsenal looked more solid at the back and Gabriel's return after a groin injury could not have been better timed. He does make them look more solid.

There is still an issue with Viktor Gyokeres who contributed very little as centre forward. Mikel Merino struggled to fill the void left by Rice's knee injury. Villa had hope. But that all changed when Arsenal scored just three minutes after the restart. Bukayo Saka's corner caused chaos in the Villa box, Gabriel tussled with Martinez and the giant Arsenal defender bundled the ball into the net.

That was Arsenal's 13th set-piece goal this season. Their 11th from a corner. It took the roof off the Emirates.

Five minutes later, Arsenal got a second. It was Odegaard who scrapped and won the ball in midfield before driving forward, doing exactly what Rice does for the team. Odegaard then threaded a lovely through ball to release Martin Zubimendi who raced into the box before slotting his shot past Martinez.

More was to follow. Piero Hincapie swung over a cross, Saka held it up and then Trossard curled it into the far corner. The goal survived a painfully long VAR check.

Jesus came on for Gyokeres and it got even better. Trossard set up the Brazil striker who curled a sublime shot past Martinez.

It was a huge win. Easily Arsenal's best performance since they beat Bayern Munich last month.

David Raya pulled off an incredible double save in injury time only for Ollie Watkins to get a last gasp consolation – too little too late.

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express.co.uk/sport

END OF THE WORLD AS JAMIE PAYS ASHES PRICE

Smith axed for T20 World Cup: Page 55

LUKE'S BRACED FOR NEW YEAR BOOS BATTLE

Littler expects 'worst' from the crowd: Page 54

ARSENAL 4 1 ASTON VILLA

Defender sparks rout...and Jesus adds flourish

BY **JOHN CROSS**

MIKEL ARTETA enjoyed a glorious win as Arsenal put themselves five points clear at the top of the table.

The Gunners enjoyed a second-half goal rush as Gabriel, Martin Zubimendi, Leandro Trossard and supersub Gabriel Jesus were on target.

They blew title rivals Aston Villa away with a brilliant response and a statement victory.

Arsenal went six points ahead of Villa and are now five clear of Manchester City who have a game in hand.

Ollie Watkins grabbed an injury-time consolation for Villa.

MATCH REPORT: PAGES 58-59

BACK WITH A BANG
Gabriel celebrates Arsenal opener before Jesus makes it four

GIFT OF THE GABS

MAN UTD 1 WOLVES 1

Ruben hits rock bottom

BY **JEREMY CROSS**

MANCHESTER United were left with faces as red as their shirts after failing to beat rock-bottom Wolves at Old Trafford.

Joshua Zirkzee fired United ahead with a deflected shot.

But Wolves stunned Ruben Amorim's men with a shock equaliser from Ladislav Krejci on half time.

MATCH REPORT: PAGE 57

WEST HAM 2 BRIGHTON 2
Match report: Page 58

CHELSEA 2 BOURNEMOUTH 2
Match report: Page 56

N FOREST 0 EVERTON 2
Match report: Page 56

BURNLEY 1 NEWCASTLE 3
Match report: Page 57

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Puzzles

SUDOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, row, and 3x3 square includes all of the digits from one to nine. **Solutions tomorrow**

EASY

7				8	6	9		
	3	4			7			1
8				2			5	
9	6	5		1				4
		8			2	7		
	7			9		6	1	5
	2			4	8			
4			1			5	2	
6		3	2	7				8

MEDIUM

					9			8
	4			3	5	6	9	7
		5		4			3	
3			5				2	
	5	4			7	1	8	
	9				4			
	3			1			5	
7	6	9	8	5				
5			4					9

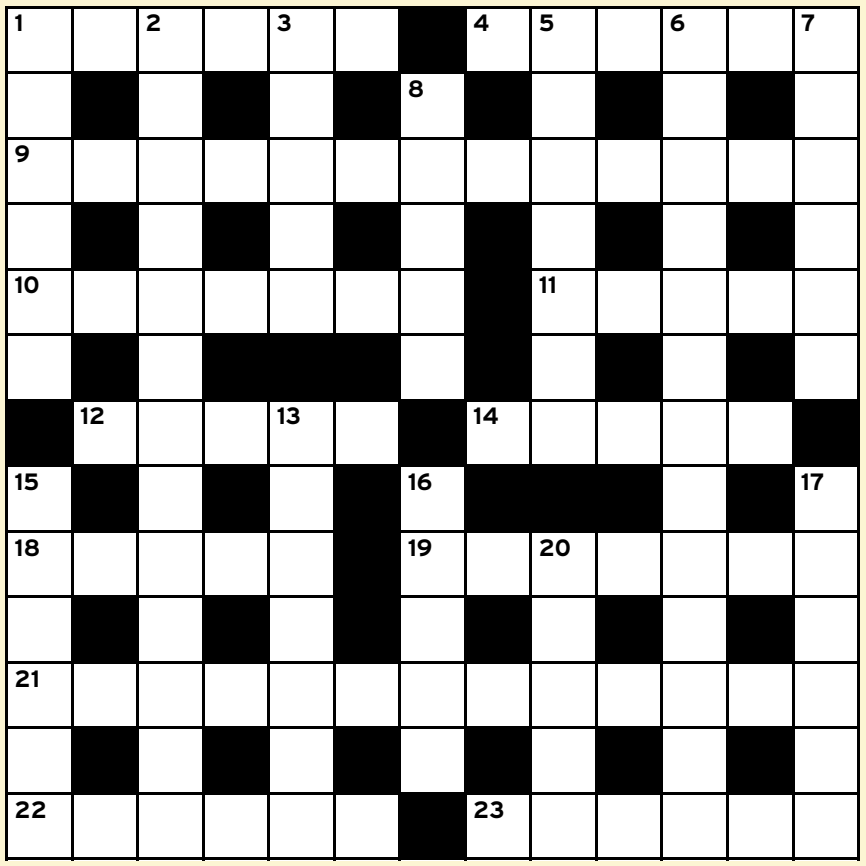
DIFFICULT

				3	5	8		
	1		7			9		
6		7						
	2		8				5	
	3			6			8	
	4				2		6	
						4		8
		2			9		1	
		1	3	8				

Extra clues: **0901 322 5609**
**Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

Today's solution: **0907 181 2573**
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Infer (6)
4 Chief (6)
9 Immediate (13)
10 Voter (7)
11 Measure (5)
12 Reel (5)
14 Pile up (5)
18 Recess (5)
19 Snare (7)
21 Rigidity (13)
22 Disturb (6)
23 More niggardly (6)

DOWN
1 Controller (6)
2 Uncivil (13)
3 Intone (5)
5 This evening (7)
6 Articulation (13)
7 Followed (6)
8 Tale (5)
13 Unity (7)
15 Weak (6)
16 Of the eye (5)
17 Actor (6)
20 Clan (5)

Solution tomorrow

Stuck on the puzzle? Call **0905 789 4188** to hear individual clues or the full solution

Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. Service provider Spoke Ltd - **Helpline 0333 202 3390*

CROSS DOUBT

Target times: Average: **20 mins** Good: **16 mins** Excellent: **12 mins**

Stuck? Call for a clue
0901 322 5601
Halve your Target Time!

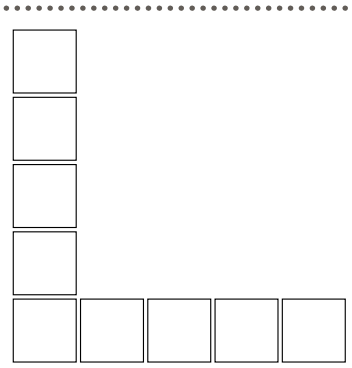
Today's solution
0901 322 5607
Both today's words in a moment!

**Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

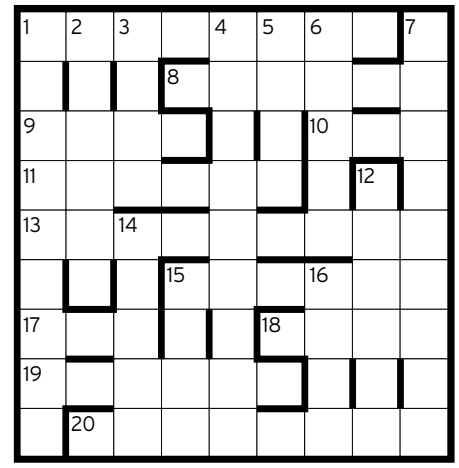
Can you make two common five-letter words from the nine letters given, using each letter only once? You can – but only if one letter features in both words in the squares on the right. There's at least one way to do it, and you have to have the right letter at the crossover – but which one is it?

See if you can find the answer within our target time. If you need help, ring our clue-line below to find out the crossover letter. Solution tomorrow

A B D E E K N O Z



SMALL CROSSWORD



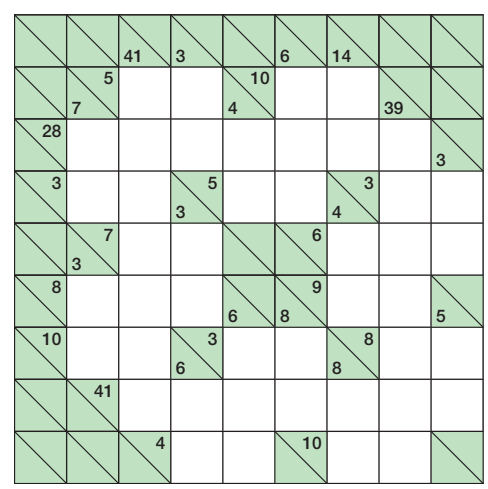
ACROSS
1 Weight used for exercise (8)
8 Naval soldier (6)
9 Go by sea (4)
10 Variety of lettuce (3)
11 Prisoner (6)
13 Person who underwrites a loan (9)
15 Substance with pH of 7 or more (6)
17 Perform on stage (3)
18 Dingy (4)
19 Minor earthquake (6)
20 Bombs thrown by hand (8)

DOWN
1 Giant seed (anag.) (9)
2 Planet (6)
3 Badly wound (4)
4 Military unit (9)
5 Gaelic (4)
6 Lawful (5)
7 Gives an account of (9)
12 Consolation (6)
14 Change (5)
15 Highest point (4)
16 Very dry (4)

Solution tomorrow

For today's solution call:
0907 181 2582
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

KAKURO



Fill each sequence of blank squares using the numbers 1-9. Each sequence – across and down – must total the number in the shaded box at the beginning or top of each line. A number may be repeated in each line but NOT in a sequence.

Solution tomorrow

Puzzles

QUIZWORD

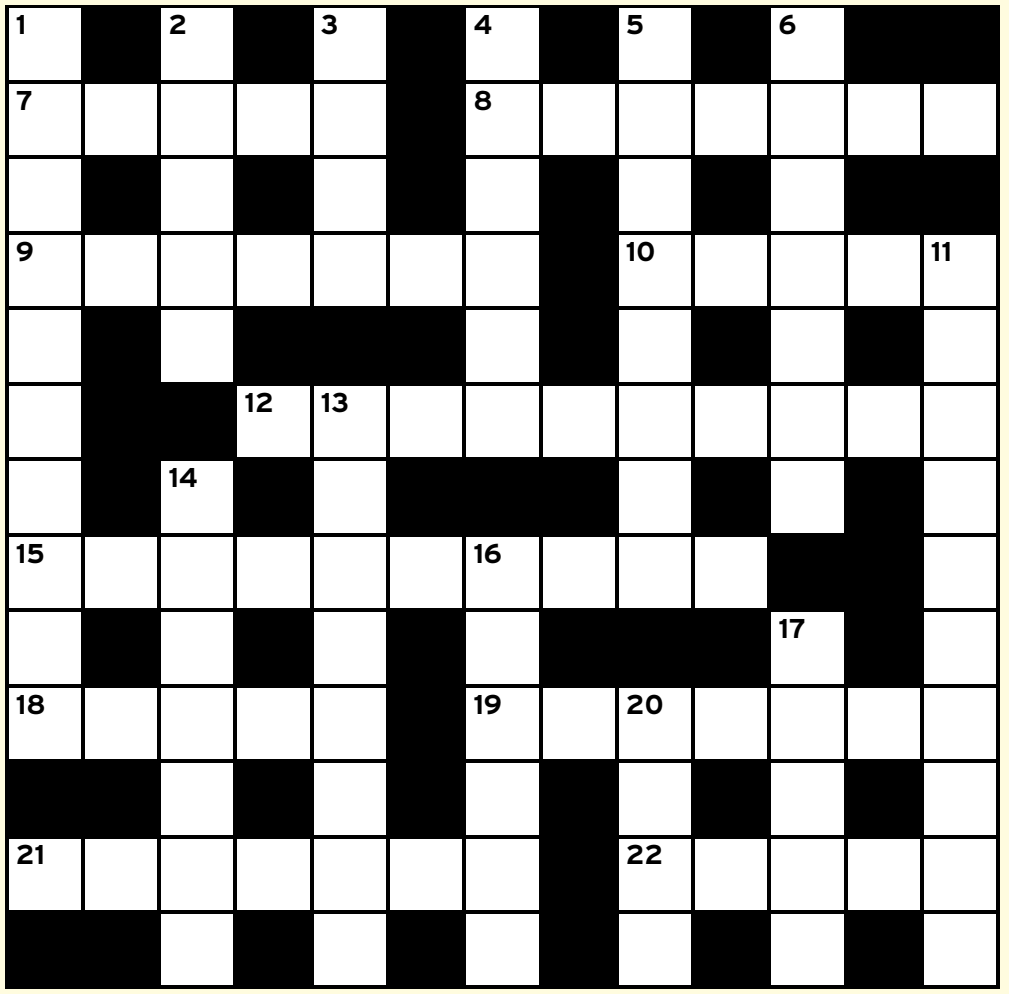
ACROSS

7 Milton, president of Uganda from 1966 to 1971 and 1980 to 1985 (5)
8 Aristotle, Turkey-born shipowner who married Jackie Kennedy in 1968 (7)
9 George, US inventor of rolled photographic film who died in 1932 (7)
10 Stringed musical instrument of India having movable frets (5)
12 Disorder characterised by sudden unwanted episodes of sleep (10)
15 1895 novel by Theodor Fontane (4,6)
18 Paul, known as Red, fire-fighting specialist whose story was the basis for the film Hellfighters (5)
19 Balthazar Johannes, prime minister of South Africa from 1966 to 1978 (7)
21 Howard, author of the 1974 play The Churchill Play (7)
22 Companion of television's The Lone Ranger (5)

DOWN

1 Spanish playwright whose works include Peribañez and The Dog In The Manger (4,2,4)
2 & 14 David Mamet film starring Lindsay Crouse and Joe Mantegna (5,2,5)
3 City in Russia on the Kama River that was formerly called Molotov (4)
4 Town in western France famed for its brandy (6)
5 Andreas, US actor whose television roles included G'Kar in the series Babylon 5 (8)
6 One of two or more atoms with the same atomic number that contain different numbers of neutrons (7)
11 1965 Wimbledon men's singles tennis champion (3,7)
13 Michele, Italian Formula 1 driver who won the 1984 Belgian GP (8)
14 See 2
16 John, author of the novel The Hotel New Hampshire (6)
17 Makhaya, South Africa Test cricketer who took 5-66 against West Indies in 2003 at Durban (5)
20 Martin, Best Director Oscar nominee for the film Hud (4)

Solution tomorrow



Stuck on the puzzle? Call
0905 789 4190
to hear individual clues or the full solution
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*
Service provider Spoke Ltd –
Helpline 0333 202 3390

SAMURAI SUDOKU

In Samurai Sudoku, normal sudoku rules apply, but the 9x9 sudoku at the centre shares four of its 3x3 boxes with those of the outer sudokus.

Solution tomorrow

	6		3				2					9		1						4
	5					8	1								2	1	9			
	1		5				7							8		4		2		9
		5				3		2				3			7		8			
			7	5				1							4			7		3
9		4		8								7	5	2				8		
		1			4					4	8					9	6		8	
				3	5				5		1						4		3	
3		2			7											2			9	
							6					9	3	2						
						3				1										
							9					1	7	4						
2		9			7											6			4	
				4	3				1		4						9		7	
		1			9					7	6					7	5		8	
8		6		7								9	4	5				2		
			6	3				8							9			7		6
		3				7		1				6			2		3			
	5		3				4							2		3		1		5
	8					1	5								1	8	6			
	1		9				3					1		4						7

WORD BUILDER

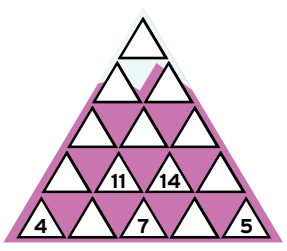
Answer each clue so that every word contains the same letters as the previous word, plus or minus one.

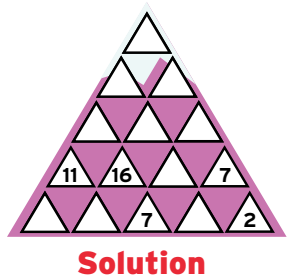
Solution tomorrow

1	□□□	1 Eggs
2	□□□□	2 Elliptical
3	□□□□□	3 Broadside
4	□□□□□□	4 Lumps of bread
5	□□□□□	5 Adores
6	□□□□	6 Single
7	□□□	7 Spanish cry

SUMMIT UP

If the number in each triangle is the sum of the two below, what is the top number?





Solution tomorrow

QUIZWORD

Across:
1 Constable,
8 Are,
9 Bob Cratchit,
11 Madonna,
12 Dolin,
13 Kelman,
15 Waters,
17 Pemba,
18 Coppola,
20 Night And Day,
22 Cut,
23 Thackeray.
Down:
2 Omo,
3 Turin,
4 Batman,
5 Echidna,
6 Natalie Wood,
7 Melanesia,
10 Badalamenti,
11 Mike Pence,
14 A Maggot,
16 Scotia,
19 Pinsk,
21 Aga.

SAMURAI SUDOKU

2	4	5	7	8	6	3	9	1				1	3	8	9	2	5	7	6	4
6	3	8	1	9	5	4	2	7				4	2	9	7	3	6	5	1	8
9	1	7	4	3	2	5	6	8				7	5	6	4	8	1	3	9	2
7	9	2	5	6	1	8	4	3				5	9	1	8	7	4	2	3	6
3	6	1	9	4	8	2	7	5				6	4	7	3	1	2	8	5	9
5	8	4	3	2	7	9	1	6				2	8	3	5	6	9	1	4	7
8	2	9	6	7	3	1	5	4	3	7	8	9	6	2	1	5	7	4	8	3
1	7	3	2	5	4	6	8	9	2	1	4	3	7	5	6	4	8	9	2	1
4	5	6	8	1	9	7	3	2	6	9	5	8	1	4	2	9	3	6	7	5
						9	2	5	1	8	6	4	3	7						
						4	7	8	9	2	3	6	5	1						
						3	1	6	5	4	7	2	8	9						
6	1	4	8	5	7	2	9	3	7	6	1	5	4	8	2	1	3	9	6	7
2	8	9	1	3	6	5	4	7	8	3	2	1	9	6	8	7	5	2	4	3
3	5	7	9	2	4	8	6	1	4	5	9	7	2	3	4	6	9	1	8	5
9	4	1	2	8	5	7	3	6				9	8	4	6	5	2	3	7	1
5	6	8	4	7	3	9	1	2				2	7	5	1	3	8	6	9	4
7	3	2	6	1	9	4	5	8				3	6	1	9	4	7	5	2	8
4	9	3	7	6	8	1	2	5				4	3	9	7	2	1	8	5	6
8	2	6	5	4	1	3	7	9				6	5	2	3	8	4	7	1	9
1	7	5	3	9	2	6	8	4				8	1	7	5	9	6	4	3	2

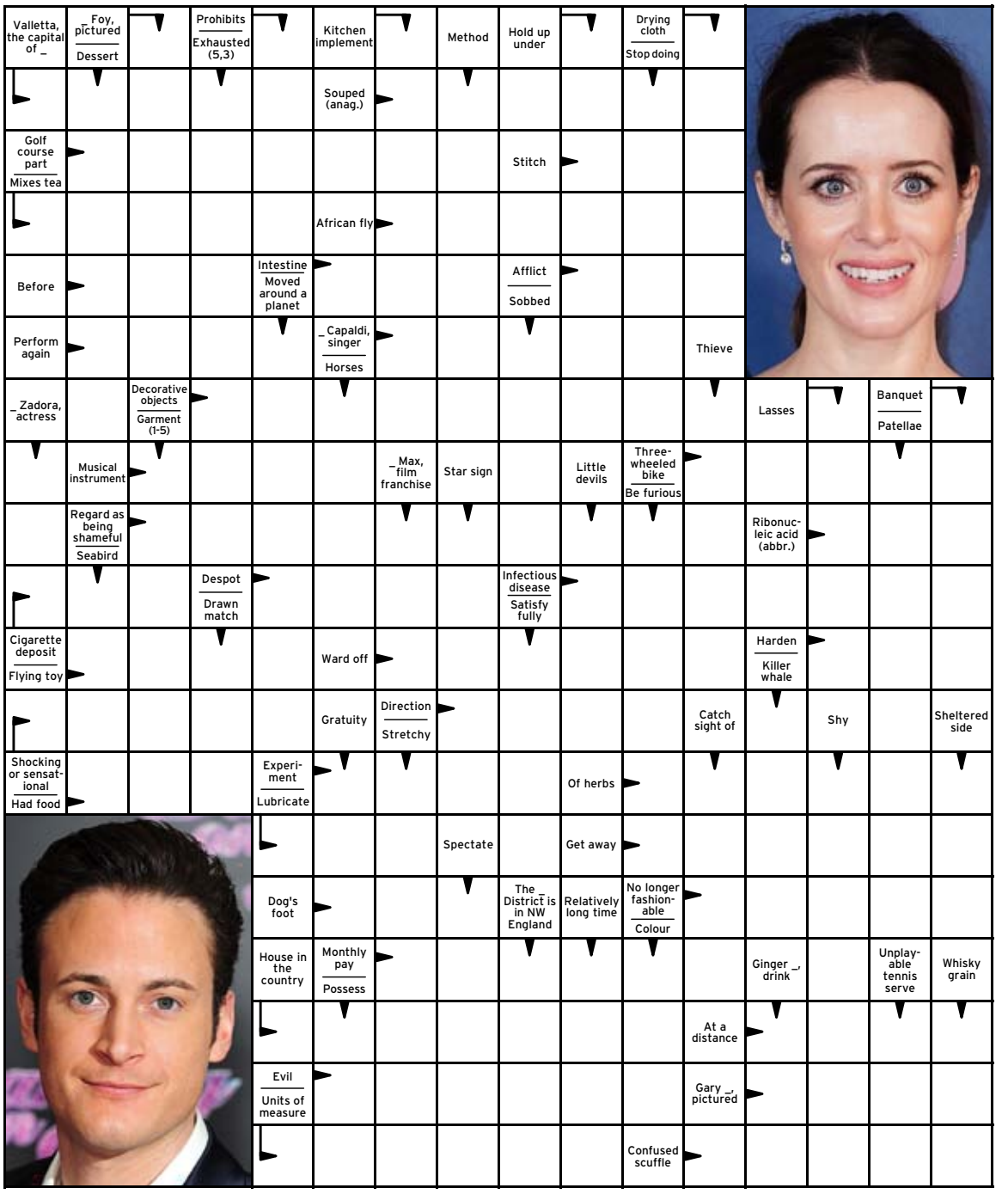
SMALL CROSSWORD

Across: 2 Pardoned, **9** Agrees, **10** Iced, **11** Pass, **13** Attic, **14** Desirable, **16** Robot, **19** Opal, **20** Used, **21** Arrive, **22** Sentence.
Down: 1 Raindrops, **3** Areas, **4** Redo, **5** Departure, **6** Neat, **7** Easily, **8** Descended, **12** People, **15** Basic, **17** Barn, **18** Burn.

ARROW-WORD

Arrow-words are like crosswords, but the clues are printed inside squares on the grid. Write your answers in the blank squares in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Solution tomorrow



WORDSEARCH

E	T	U	N	I	M	Y	R	S	S	G	G	R	T	O
X	L	Q	L	G	Y	L	V	H	N	E	U	I	F	H
F	N	W	A	D	G	R	S	I	T	O	C	M	E	G
L	O	E	W	M	G	A	N	Y	H	T	H	O	Y	Y
L	U	E	F	Q	I	E	A	R	Z	L	T	R	N	R
F	R	K	S	M	V	D	D	A	T	E	N	N	O	D
E	I	Y	E	E	R	F	N	J	N	Z	O	I	X	G
V	I	R	K	E	K	Q	N	I	S	H	M	N	Z	S
N	H	S	T	F	A	T	B	O	G	U	O	G	D	J
F	U	S	Y	Y	V	G	N	Q	S	H	N	L	V	W
D	E	C	C	H	K	V	X	Z	M	A	T	S	N	V
Y	T	R	L	C	M	W	E	H	G	B	E	Q	E	V
H	H	N	O	O	N	R	E	T	F	A	E	S	F	T
Z	Y	W	K	Q	C	A	L	E	N	D	A	R	I	O
B	D	B	K	G	F	K	T	O	G	W	Z	X	A	W

WORDS RELATED TO TIME

Find all the terms listed below in the grid.

Solution tomorrow

AFTERNOON ● CALENDAR ● CLOCK
DATE ● DAWN ● DUSK ● EARLY ● EVENING
HOUR ● MIDNIGHT ● MINUTE ● MONTH
MORNING ● SEASON ● SECOND ● SUNSET
WEEK ● YESTERDAY

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

QUICK CROSSWORD

Across: **1** Contemptible, **7** Merit, **8** Plain, **9** Own, **10** Constrain, **11** Resume, **12** Fellow, **15** Pestilent, **17** Air, **18** Evict, **19** Tooth, **21** Independence.
Down: **1** Cartographer, **2** Err, **3** Potent, **4** Impatient, **5** Llama, **6** Unanswerable, **7** Minus, **10** Committee, **13** Leash, **14** Nettle, **16** Scion, **20** Odd.

WORDSEARCH

I	X	U	J	N	V	B	X	N	F	B	L	Z	F	U
D	J	O	Y	B	K	O	P	J	B	R	G	P	L	F
S	L	R	T	O	S	P	O	C	K	U	O	U	L	K
E	T	O	X	M	C	A	T	A	D	P	S	W	P	O
V	J	K	B	T	F	C	G	O	W	R	O	N	S	X
E	V	O	K	E	H	C	M	H	A	K	I	R	K	Z
N	L	P	U	O	K	L	A	F	O	R	G	E	P	Q
O	I	K	S	C	O	T	T	Y	Z	K	L	G	I	U
F	O	Y	C	U	X	N	U	T	E	Q	U	B	C	A
N	R	M	A	R	K	I	Y	V	H	R	O	F	A	R
I	J	T	V	W	U	G	W	F	O	O	V	W	R	K
N	V	F	X	W	E	S	D	R	Z	K	K	L	D	K
E	J	R	B	N	Q	N	H	E	W	Q	U	S	X	S
U	H	U	R	A	P	Y	A	E	F	H	A	L	I	M
T	Y	C	A	A	H	S	G	J	R	G	P	I	V	S

ARROW-WORD

	F		B		L		T		A		P			
T	R	A	U	M	A		O	U	N	C	E			
	A		L		N	U	N		T		R			
Q	U	E	B	E	C		G	R	O	S	S			
		E		N	E	T		O	N	T	O			
A	T	L	A	S	T		D	O	Y	E	N			
	A		R	U	S	S	E	T		V	A	N		H
S	N	I	D	E		P	A	S	T	E	L		D	O	T
	K		E		B	A	D		A			C	U	T	E
S	A	R	N	I	E		E	A	R	L	Y		B		E
	R	O	T		D	E	N	O	T	E		B	A	I	T
A	D	U	L	T		V		R		G	A	R	I	S	H
	S	T	Y		S	E	A	T		A	P	E		L	
				Q		W	A	L	L	P	A	P	E	R	
J	U	N	E						A	D	O			O	
	A			S	O	B	E	R		L	A	D			
A	L	C	O	V	E			E	X	I	L	E			
	I		M	E	L	O	N		C	O	N				
A	D	V	E	R	T		T	W	E	E	T				

SUDOKU EASY

3	2	1	8	4	9	5	7	6
7	5	6	1	2	3	8	4	9
8	4	9	7	6	5	2	3	1
5	7	8	9	1	4	6	2	3
6	1	3	2	5	8	4	9	7
2	9	4	3	7	6	1	8	5
9	3	5	4	8	1	7	6	2
4	6	7	5	3	2	9	1	8
1	8	2	6	9	7	3	5	4

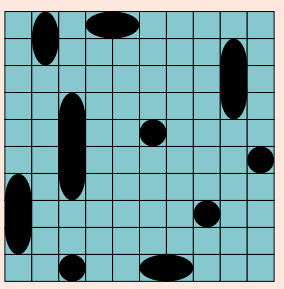
SUDOKU MEDIUM

7	1	5	4	6	2	3	9	8
8	2	9	3	5	7	1	6	4
4	3	6	9	1	8	5	7	2
2	7	4	5	9	1	8	3	6
6	8	3	2	7	4	9	5	1
5	9	1	8	3	6	4	2	7
1	5	8	6	2	9	7	4	3
9	6	7	1	4	3	2	8	5
3	4	2	7	8	5	6	1	9

SUDOKU DIFFICULT

7	6	8	1	3	4	2	5	9
3	2	5	9	6	8	7	4	1
4	1	9	2	5	7	8	6	3
2	5	4	8	1	9	3	7	6
8	7	3	5	4	6	1	9	2
6	9	1	3	7	2	4	8	5
1	8	7	6	9	3	5	2	4
5	4	6	7	2	1	9	3	8
9	3	2	4	8	5	6	1	7

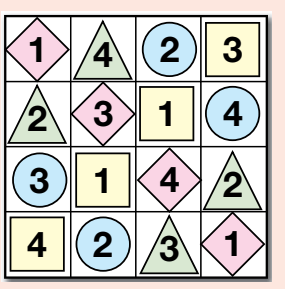
BATTLESHIPS



KAKURO

	1	2		4	2	1		
	3	7	1	8	5	4	6	2
		9	3	7			1	3
				5	2		5	1
	1	3		9	1			
	2	1			3	1	2	
	7	8	2	4	6	3	5	1
			1	3	4		1	3

KEIJO



TARGET

WOMANLIKE alien, alike, aloe, alone, anil, ankle, elan, email, kail, kale, kali, kaolin, kaoline, kelim, kiln, kilo, kola, lain, lake, lame, lane, lank, lawn, leak, lean, lemon, liane, lien, like, liken, lima, lime, limo, line, link, lino, lion, loam, loan, loin, lone, mail, male, manlike, meal, melon, menial, mewl, mile, milk, mole, nail, oilman, olein, wail, wale, walk, weal, wile, winkle, WOMANLIKE

THE ALPHAPUZZLE

Across: Religion (clue), Erring, Chisel, Bradawl, Drunk, Ibex, Tin, Foe, Mite, Awash, Outstay, Jumper, Squire, Takeover.
Down: Decorous, Ether, Tactful, Gherkin, Abet, Brevity, Near, Feature, Bizarre, Siege, Goldfish.

THE ALPHABEATER

Black squares: 3, 5, 7, 9, 13, 17, 18, 19, 22, 25, 28, 33, 34, 35.
Across: Local, Dialect, Beg, Aghast, Half, Hajji, Evaporate, Resettled, Ulnar, Ways, Enigma, Zip, Waltzed, Yokes. **Down:** Harrow, Omega, Aqua, Joys, Exsert, Leakiest, Dahlia, Lunged, Obduracy, Lather, Axon, Cool, Alive, Flexor.

CROSS DOUBT

Across: WORST
Down: FOLKS

SUMMIT UP

92 and 79

WORD BUILDER

Fir, Fire, Rifle, Filter, Flirt, Flit, Fit

Puzzles

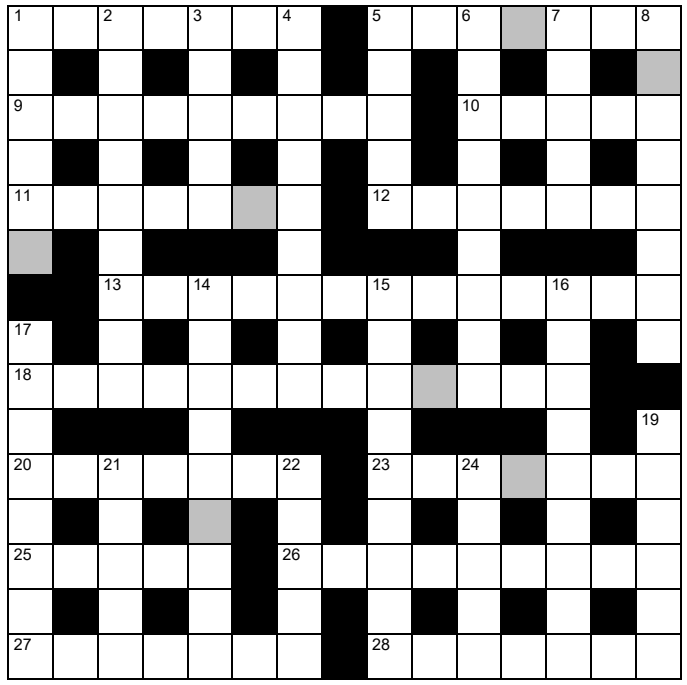
CRUSADER PRIZE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Seeking a sport (7)
5 Chewed section in non-speaking role (3,4)
9 They watch attractive people performing (7-2)
10 Left current item of underwear as a sign (5)
11 Check a lizard (7)
12 Croon wildly, having married one foreign character (7)
13 Press after struggling to get a fastener (9-4)
18 Conveyance making empty talk increase rapidly (3-3,7)
20 Point learnt about being everlasting (7)
23 Terrible cot started plague (7)
25 Musical form starts to feel useless – giving up etude (5)
26 Gauge terribly remote pub first (9)
27 Long to send Glen your old form (7)
28 Registered university student turned aimlessly, in a graphic manner (7)

DOWN

1 Pal upset old doctor's self-confidence (6)
2 Auspicious but dark time for a leave-taking (4,5)
3 Sluggish at the interchange (5)
4 Somewhere to eat sprout – bag broke (9)
5 Stop woman getting an instrument (5)
6 Chatting with heartless couple as a reprimand (7-2)
7 Clambering around gemstone (5)
8 Preparing the front, chucking it down (8)
14 Lamenting strange positioning (9)
15 One pound – generous but intolerant (9)
16 Evaluated having broken oven done up (9)
17 Happy church set free to turn left (8)
19 Obvious, without a chap losing heart to priests (6)
21 Urge, like a croque-madame (3,2)
22 Pressure group in the hall (5)
24 Rude murmur included protest (5)



WIN £100 CASH

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN
Read down the letters in the highlighted squares to reveal the mystery word.

TO ENTER: Call **0904 161 3700** (calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge) and leave your answer and details, or text **DXCRUS** followed by a space, your answer, name and address details to **88833** (texts cost £1.50 plus your standard network rate). Lines close at midnight Saturday. Or send your grid containing the answer in the shaded squares by posting it to: Crusader Crossword, December 31, PO Box 8694, Derby DE1 9TW. Entries must be postmarked by January 1 at the latest. For any postal enquiries, call helpline number. SP: Spoke – 0333 202 3390.
An extra day is given for postal entries during bank holidays.
● ***One weekly winner will be the first random correct entry drawn from all entry routes after the closing date of midnight Saturday. Competition runs Sunday to Saturday. The Editor's decision is final.***

NEED HELP? Call **0904 161 1609** for 5 extra clues! Calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge.

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

MONDAY'S SOLUTION
ACROSS: 1 Glance, 4 Sceptres, 10 Nascent, 11 Ellipse, 12 Scrap, 13 Activated, 14 Eleventh hour, 18 Merchant navy, 23 Anomalous, 24 Swell, 25 Seabird, 26 Realism, 27 Tenantry, 28 Spleen.
DOWN: 1 Gangster, 2 Assorted, 3 Creep, 5 Cheetah, 6 Pole vault, 7 Repute, 8 Steady, 9 At last, 15 Elevation, 16 Date line, 17 Cyclamen, 19 Chowder, 20 Absurd, 21 Basset, 22 Domain, 24 Swamp. **Prizeword:** Sanitary

TARGET

U	E	T
T	C	I
D	A	Q

● *The Target uses words in the main body of Chambers 21st Century Dictionary (1999 edition)*

HOW many words of four letters or more can you make from the letters shown here?
In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each must contain the centre letter and there must be at least one nine-letter word. No plurals. Verb forms ending in S permitted.

TODAY'S TARGET
Good 13; **very good** 19; **excellent** 25 **(or more).** Solution tomorrow

Call **0907 181 2585**
for today's Target solution
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

BATTLESHIPS

FIND where the fleet of ships shown is hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some squares have been filled in to start you off.
Solution tomorrow

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
A									■		3
B											2
C										■	1
D	■						■				4
E											1
F											2
G											2
H											1
I			■								2
J	■										2
	2	2	3	0	2	1	1	3	1	5	

1 x Battleship
3 x Destroyer
2 x Cruiser
4 x Submarine

THE ALPHABEATER

TARGET TIME: 36 minutes

CAN you crack the Alphabeater? Each grid number represents a letter – or black square. As in Alphapuzzle, every letter of the alphabet is used. But you have to complete the grid too! Use the given letters and black squares below the grid to start. The grid is 'rotationally symmetrical' – in other words, it looks the same if you turn the page upside down.
Solution tomorrow

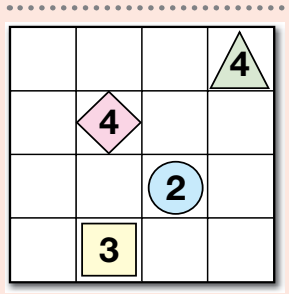
Extra letter clues
0907 181 2560
(Deduct three minutes for each extra clue letter heard)
Full solution
0907 181 2558
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

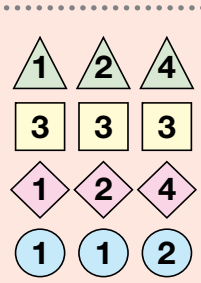
A	24	13	29	9	13	35	27	21	40	17	28	35	8
B	20	22	8	25	22	39	32	10	27	20	25	1	10
C	5	18	40	24	32	29	31	11	18	9	26	13	15
D	30	21	11	3	28	10	14	26	33	3	32	9	30
E	10	27	6	1	4	30	32	29	4	6	35	40	2
F	36	25	3	32	30	11	18	3	2	30	20	19	21
G	4	24	12	23	40	1	38	21	39	25	6	31	10
H	20	37	3	11	15	25	26	20	1	13	30	20	9
I	18	26	1	2	22	7	20	34	8	23	2	23	15
J	19	31	32	30	16	6	34	2	18	13	9	16	11
K	39	13	22	9	10	14	13	14	13	29	38	39	32
L	28	30	5	32	11	8	29	6	15	32	28	4	1
M	12	7	4	7	38	37	3	23	32	31	24	3	29

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
N					W							■				K			F	
O	21	22	23	24	25	■	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40

● Alternatively, for six Extra Letter clues to your mobile, text **DXBEAT** to **64343.** Texts cost £1 plus standard network rate.

KEIJO





Place the tiles into the grid so that four different numbers and four different shapes appear in each row and column.
Solution tomorrow

THE ALPHAPUZZLE®

Alphapuzzle® tests logic and word power. Each grid number stands for a letter. Every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter or letters – below the main grid – to start. Solution tomorrow

DIFFICULTY: 7/10; **TARGET:** 24 mins; **CLUE:** Lucky thing Alan's in Main St mess.

A	■	14	■	8	■	16	■	20				5	■
B	■	3	5	20	1	11	3	23	■	21	5	3	1
C	■	6	■	13	■	8	■	15	■	13	■	19	■
D	8	11	23	1	■	1	5	15	13	8	18	5	7
E	■	19	■	■	■	15	■	23	■	21	■	21	■
F	10	2	23	23	26	12	■	1	3	5	21	23	3
G	■	■	■	24	■	■	■	■	■	13	■	■	■
H	6	25	25	20	11	1	■	17	13	7	5	3	12
I	■	13	■	5	■	5	■	12	■	■	■	23	■
J	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	■	19	5	22	23
K	■	4	■	8	■	14	■	13	■	15	■	6	■
L	20	13	7	23	■	2	23	7	20	23	19	4	■
M	■	7	■	■	■	1	■	23	■	25	■	23	■

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N													
O	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 D	22	23	24	25 F	26

EXTRA LETTER CLUES: 0907 181 2568*
Hear up to six Extra Letters, deduct two minutes for each clue letter heard.
FULL SOLUTION: **0907 181 2565***
ACROSS ONLY: **0907 181 2561*** / DOWN ONLY: **0907 181 2562***
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

Alternatively, for six extra letter clues direct to your mobile, text **DXALPHA** *to* **64343.** *Texts cost £1 plus standard network rate.*

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THE DAILY EXPRESS 30-SECOND CHALLENGE

TODAY'S ANSWERS: BEGINNER = 56; INTERMEDIATE = 241; ADVANCED = 108.

PLAY MORE CROSSWORDS AND GAMES AT EXPRESS.CO.UK/PUZZLES